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This performance edition of Louis Vierne's *Sonata in g minor for Violin and Piano* presents an interpretation of the violin part through phrase indications, bowings, and fingerings. A brief formal analysis of each of the four movements is also included.

Chapter one introduces biographical information about the composer, the intent of the study, and the need for the edition. The second chapter explains how the edition was put together and gives conclusions regarding the need for other performance editions of Vierne's string music. After presenting analyses for the four movements, the thesis concludes with the performance edition.

LOUIS VIERNE'S *SONATA IN G MINOR FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO*: A PERFORMANCE EDITION

by

Daniel J. Skidmore

A Dissertation Submitted to
The Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Musical Arts

Greensboro
2006

Approved by

_____
Committee Chair

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair _____

Committee Members _____

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Date of Acceptance by Committee

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Date of Final Oral Examination

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank John Fadial and Sarah Dorsey for their tireless assistance with this document, Denis Ruiz for compiling an extensive web page on Louis Vierne, Frederick St. Pierre for assisting me with French translation issues, and my Uncle James Skidmore for his unflagging support of this project.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Louis Vierne (1870-1937) is primarily remembered as the composer of *Twenty-four Fantasy Pieces* for organ, six organ symphonies, and as a virtuoso organist who studied with Cesar Franck and Charles-Marie Widor at the Paris Conservatory. Although only seventeen of his sixty-two opus numbers are works for organ, his renown as a composer seldom extends outside the genre of organ music. As a result, a large portion of his compositional output has suffered neglect. His *Sonata in g minor for Violin and Piano*, completed in 1906 for the Belgian violin virtuoso Eugene Ysaÿe (1858-1931), is one such work, having been commercially recorded by only two violinists. The two existing editions of this work are devoid of suggested fingerings and bowings.

This sonata exemplifies Vierne's compositional style, characterized by clear ideas and a solid formal plan. Large sections usually encompass one coloristic region. Cyclical style and use of chromaticism grow well beyond Franck's extremes. Fermatas frequently appear between sections, perhaps similar to those used by an organist who pauses to set new stops.

Purpose

The intent of this study is to present a much needed scholarly edition of Louis Vierne's *Sonata in g minor for Violin and Piano*. Durand first printed the work in 1908, and Kalmus essentially reprinted the same edition in 1991. The performance edition contained in this document is distinguished from its predecessors by its editorial material (suggested fingerings and bowings) and a brief analysis of each movement.

The difficulties in making these interpretive decisions were threefold: (1) the sonata has not remained in the standard repertoire, (2) Vierne was blind, and (3) obtaining the original manuscript has remained elusive. According to Ronald Francois, whose dissertation work included a performance of this sonata, "Because [the work has] not remained in the standard repertoire, a performance tradition…has not evolved. The transmission of interpretive ideas is traditionally done within the confines of the master/student relationship, and a lineage can usually be traced back to the source as in the case of the Franck sonata where a tradition exists."[1] Francois purportedly examined the original manuscript and found a document void of fingerings and sparse on bowings.

Confusing matters at this point is whether or not the original manuscript still exists. The National Library of France in Paris originally claimed to have this document, but they have only been able to produce a copy of the Durand edition.

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[1] Ronald Pierre Francois, "Dedications to Eugene Ysaÿe" (D.M.A. diss., University of Maryland College Park, 1998), 8.

Vierne was born with congenital cataracts. In October 1881 he entered the *Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles*, a school that provided practical training for blind people. Early on it became apparent that he could repeat tunes upon a single hearing, and within nine years he won prizes in violin, piano, and composition.[2] His blindness historically has raised questions as to the accuracy of his editors and copyists. Steven George Young discovered discrepancies between several of Vierne's manuscripts and their published editions in his dissertation work.

Justification

Violin repertoire often receives multiple publications. For example the Tchaikovsky violin concerto has well over fifty published editions with editorial markings by such esteemed violinists as Leopold Auer, Carl Flesch, Fritz Kreisler, and David Oistrakh. The issues of fingerings and bowings are central to the interpretation of violin music. Because these topics have not been addressed by earlier publications of Vierne's violin sonata, an edition that provides an informed interpretation would undoubtedly enhance the likelihood of its being performed.

Eugene Ysaÿe, the Sonata's dedicatee, first performed the work in 1908 with pianist Raoul Pugno. Vierne and Pugno were friends who spent several summers together in Gargenville, France. In 1905, the first of these summers, Ysaÿe made Vierne's acquaintance and commissioned the sonata.

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[2] Stephen George Young, "The Life and Work of Louis Vierne, 1870-1937" (D.M.A. diss., Boston University, 1994), 4.

Over fifty works were indisputably written for Ysaÿe who was so revered in his time that composers often deferred musical authority to him. At the premiere of Franck's Violin Sonata, arguably the most famous work dedicated to Ysaÿe, Armand Parent, a famous violinist, commented to Franck that Ysaÿe did not always adhere to the composer's intentions. Franck replied, "This may be so, but from now on it will be impossible to perform it any other way. Don't worry, it is Ysaÿe who is right."[3]

Given the fact that Ysaÿe thoroughly marked music he performed, it is highly regrettable that the original manuscript (or, if different, the version Ysaÿe possessed) has not surfaced in the course of this research. Similar stylistic and idiomatic principles from other works by Ysaÿe, such as the preface to his *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin*, have been applied to this performance edition.

Related Research

Rollin Smith has compiled an excellent resource entitled *Louis Vierne: Organist of the Notre-Dame Cathedral*. In addition to biographical information, it contains an annotated translation of Vierne's memoirs.

For further biographical information, Stephen George Young wrote a dissertation called *The Life and Work of Louis Vierne, 1870-1937*. He demonstrates Vierne's importance as an organist and composer and briefly explains the history of educating the blind in nineteenth-century France.

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[3] Lev Ginsburg, *Ysaÿe* (Neptune City, NJ: Paganiniana, 1980), 105.

More difficult to find is a good source for bowing and fingering concepts. William Haydn's dissertation, "Principles of Bowing and Fingering for Editing Violin Music," is impractical. His writing style is abstract and long-winded. Sixty-four pieces of music are represented, but the examples he chooses are too short, often not spanning a complete musical phrase. A study of this kind would be more effective if the author compared and contrasted two editions of the same piece.

The preface to Ysaÿe's *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin* is an excellent source for understanding his conception of fingerings and bowings. These sonatas are heavily marked with a variety of fingerings, including quarter tones and shifts, and bowings, including bow speed and distribution. Ysaÿe provides a table in the preface that explains all of these markings.

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURES

Methodology

Notation of the edition was made on a computer using Finale 1998 software. A preface analyzing the four movements reflects editorial decisions made as applied to the Kalmus edition. Guidelines administered by A-R Editions for recent publications will be followed (See Appendix C).

Several Sources were consulted in attempting to locate the original manuscript of the sonata, including the two publishers (Durand and Masters Music), the two recording artists (Alexis Galperine and Anne Robert), the Library of Congress, the Sibley Music Library at the Eastman School of Music, the Notre Dame Cathedral where Vierne served as organist, and ultimately the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. The results from these queries ranged from no response, location uncertain, and an expressed belief that the Bibliotheque Nationale has it in their possession.

The interlibrary loan office at UNCG requested this document in the summer of 2003 when the Bibliotheque Nationale confirmed that they indeed had a copy of the original manuscript in microfiche form. When they refrained from sending a copy for almost a year, I gave Dr. Ted Walton (whose research for a doctorate in French was conducted primarily at the Bibliotheque Nationale) permission to obtain the microfiche in person, as he was conducting a tour of

Paris late in the spring of 2005 (See Appendix D). When he approached them about the matter, they were very uncooperative, claiming they had no idea who I was. They never admitted it was lost, but Ted gathered from their embarrassed expressions that the document's location was actually unknown. Shortly after this encounter, the Bibliotheque Nationale sent a copy of the Durand edition to the UNCG interlibrary loan office. It is for these reasons that at this time it is assumed that the location of the original manuscript remains unknown.

Conclusion

Louis Vierne died of a sudden stroke seated at the organ during his one thousand seven hundred fiftieth performance. Although he is best remembered as a composer of music for organ, his non-organ output is of equal caliber. Alongside his *Sonata in g minor for Violin and Piano* stands only one other composition featuring solo violin, his opus 52 *Ballade* for violin and orchestra, written nearly twenty years later. His only other sonata was written in 1910 for cello and piano. He also wrote two string chamber works: a string quartet in 1894 and a piano quintet in 1917-18. All of these works have shared the same neglect as the violin sonata and would likely gain more performances from the publication of new editions. A modern, coherent edition with sound editorial markings would serve to make the violin sonata more accessible to performers and increase the likelihood of its being programmed.

Only two editions and two commercial recordings of Vierne's *Sonata in g minor for Violin and Piano* have become available since the work's composition in 1906. Hopefully the sonata will receive more performances and be recorded more as a result of this study. It is a work firmly rooted in the late Romantic French tradition that could provide an unusual and worthy alternative to the more frequently programmed sonatas of Franck and Faure.

THE PERFORMANCE EDITION OF THE SOLO VIOLIN PART OF LOUIS VIERNE'S SONATA IN G MINOR FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO: FIRST MOVEMENT: ALLEGRO RISOLUTO; SECOND MOVEMENT: ANDANTE SOSTENUTO; THIRD MOVEMENT: INTERMEZZO; AND FOURTH MOVEMENT: LARGAMENTE-ALLEGRO AGITATO

Analysis

Louis Vierne's *Sonata in g minor for Violin and Piano* op. 23 from 1906 is a four-movement work that is best understood by traditional sonata form concepts and a few unique elements. Some thematic material is cyclical, particularly the opening violin theme. Melodic and rhythmic figures are often only subtly suggested between movements. The most unique quality of the work is the frequent use of the fermata to delineate formal divisions, a technique that possibly reveals the organist/composer "changing the stops" between each contrasting section.

First movement: Allegro risoluto

This movement exemplifies a modified traditional sonata form that moves from g to G in the following way:

A. Exposition

1. First theme (m. 1-64): i-V/v
2. Second theme (m. 65-119): V/v-iv

B. Development

    1. First theme motives (m. 120-213): iv-V7/e
    2. Second theme motives (m. 214-257): chromaticism-V7/i

C. Recapitulation

    1. First theme (m. 258-318): i-V
    2. Surprise (M. 319-322): Ger6-V/B
    3. Second theme (m. 323-384): distant keys-I
    4. Coda (m. 385-414): I

The tonality of the movement is obscured from the beginning as the piano emphatically declares a c minor accompanimental figure. When the violin enters in the next measure, the melody begins on Bb, the minor seventh above c, creating the V7/I that implies the movement's tonic. It is this initial harmonic friction that justifies the later tonal ambiguities and struggle for resolution throughout the sonata.

Melodic material is cleverly related between the two theme groups. The first four measures of the second theme suggest an augmentation of the first two measures of the opening violin theme by starting with a descent by step and ending with a fourth-span descent. These subtle parallels between thematic ideas will be carried into the melodic material for the middle two movements.

Second movement: Andante sostenuto

The opening melody of this lyrical movement combines elements of the two themes from the first movement while establishing an expansive new melody of distinct shape and motion. Descending thirds from measure 1 through the downbeat of measure 3 are characteristic of the second theme, while the motion from G to Bb to Ab recalls the first two measures of the first theme (where the arrival was A-natural). The key signature does not reveal anything significant about this theme, which neither begins nor ends in Eb Major. It does indicate the goal of this first section as well as the end of the movement.

Two new thematic ideas are established between opening and closing presentations of the main melodic material. The following thematic diagram could represent the overall form of this movement:

A. Theme 1 (m. 1-48)
B. Theme 2 (m. 49-66)
C. Theme 3 (m. 67-74)
D. Transition / motivic development (m. 75-99)
E. Theme 1 (m. 100-136)

Third Movement: Intermezzo (Quazi vivace)

There is a scherzo feel about this movement generated by the sprightly spicatto in 3/8 meter, but it does not follow a traditional scherzo-trio form. This is the only movement in the sonata where formal delineations are not set off by fermatas or a stretching of the tempo. Harmonic motion is directed from b minor

to B Major, just as the opening and closing movements move from g minor to G Major. This key structure is typical for works in minor keys, the inner movements being related to the overall key by a third below and a third above tonic.

Cohesion between movements continues to be established through the cyclical composition of themes. The first four measures of the opening violin theme reveal a contour directly related to the beginning of the sonata, each measure reaching a third higher than the previous bar, culminating in an arrival with a stepwise descent to an accented note.

Vierne directs the harmonic motion of this intermezzo through the three themes that permeate the movement. The first (m. 1-32) and third (m. 65-92) themes are unstable, meaning they end in different key areas than they started, and are the ones he uses to search for the harmonic destinations. Theme two (m. 33-48) brings stability to the work, always remaining tonally centered throughout its duration.

Fourth movement: Largamente-Allegro agitato

The finale certainly defines this sonata as a cyclical work as several motivic gestures reappear, though some are more cleverly cloaked than others. In measure 10, melodic material from the second movement's third theme is unmistakable. The melodic contour of the opening four bars of the first movement pervades the launching of the Allegro agitato section. Measure 84 is a rhythmic augmentation of measure 36 from the intermezzo.

There are so many thematic and harmonic shifts in this movement that it is difficult to grasp all that is happening, and this is apparently by design. Vierne brings stability to the movement beginning in measure 134 with an expansive augmentation of the Allegro's opening theme (m. 43) that considerably slows down the harmonic pulse. The accompanimental figures in the piano are minimalistic and are a great relief to all the harmonic activity that preceded. It is this section that defines the sonata form of this movement as follows:

A. Introduction (m. 1-42)
B. Exposition (m. 43-133)
C. Development (m. 134-251)
D. Recapitulation (m. 252-328)
E. Coda (m. 329-357)

THE PERFORMANCE EDITION OF THE SOLO VIOLIN PART

SONATE

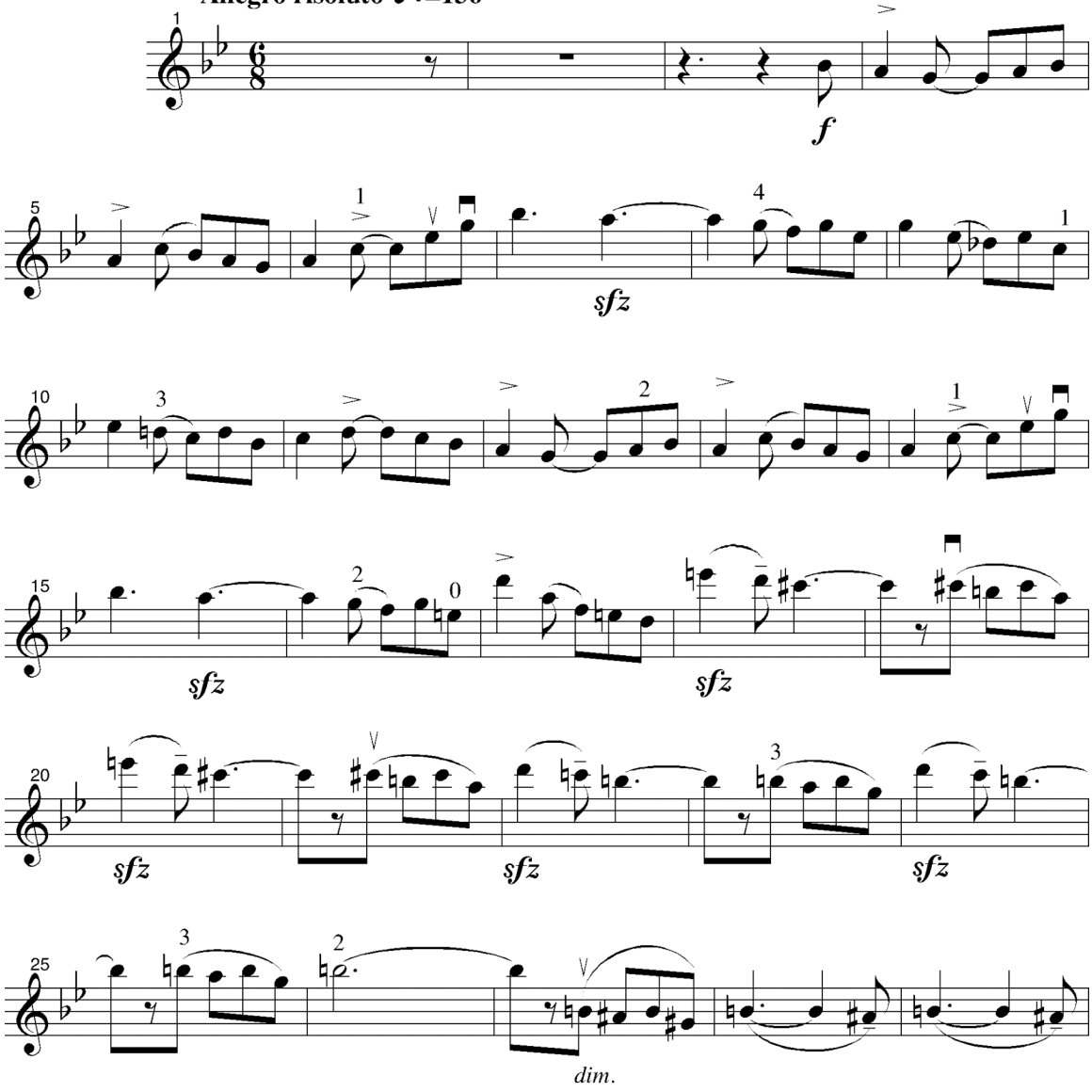
en Sol mineur

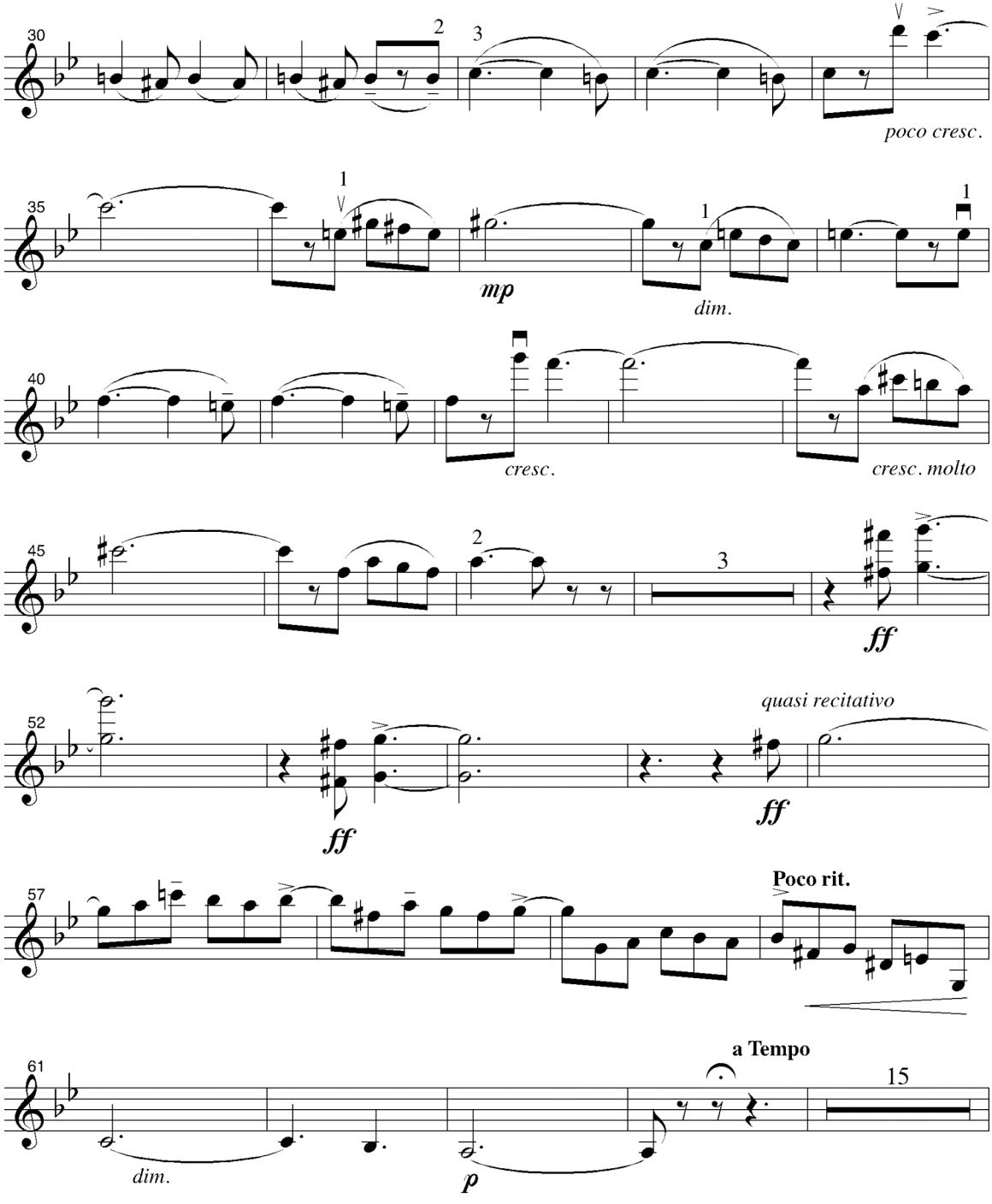
Violin

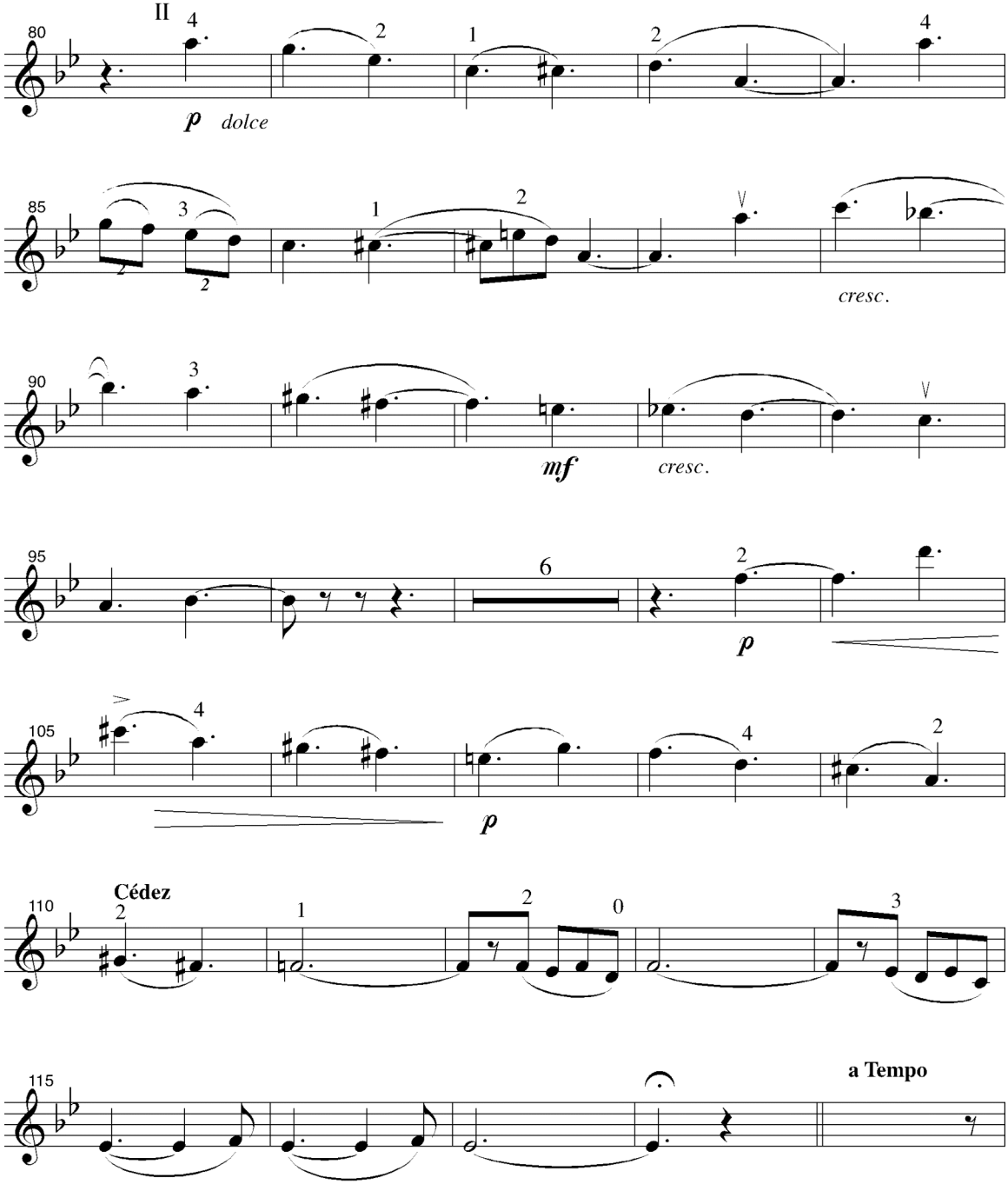
I

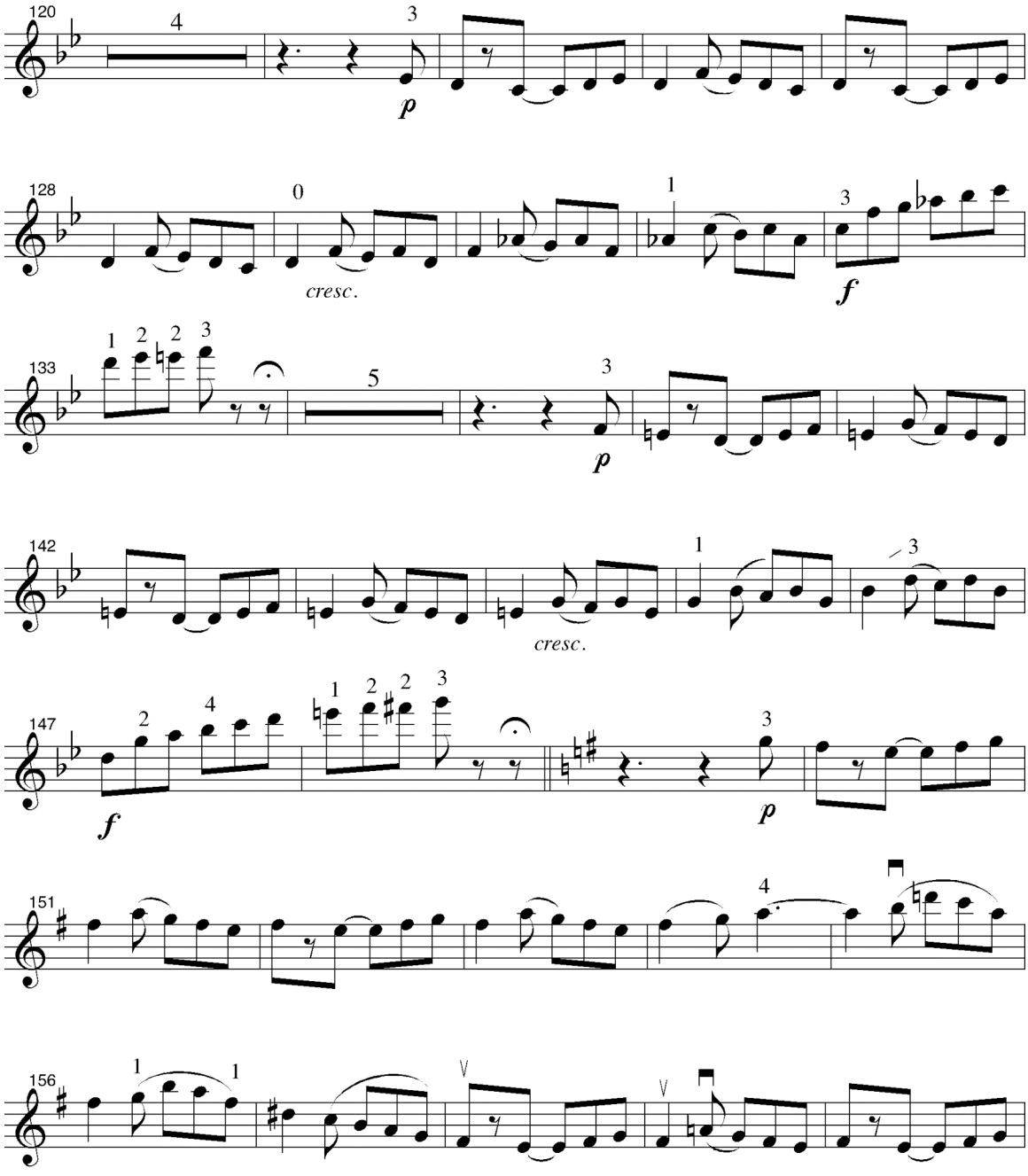
LOUIS VIERNE
Op. 23

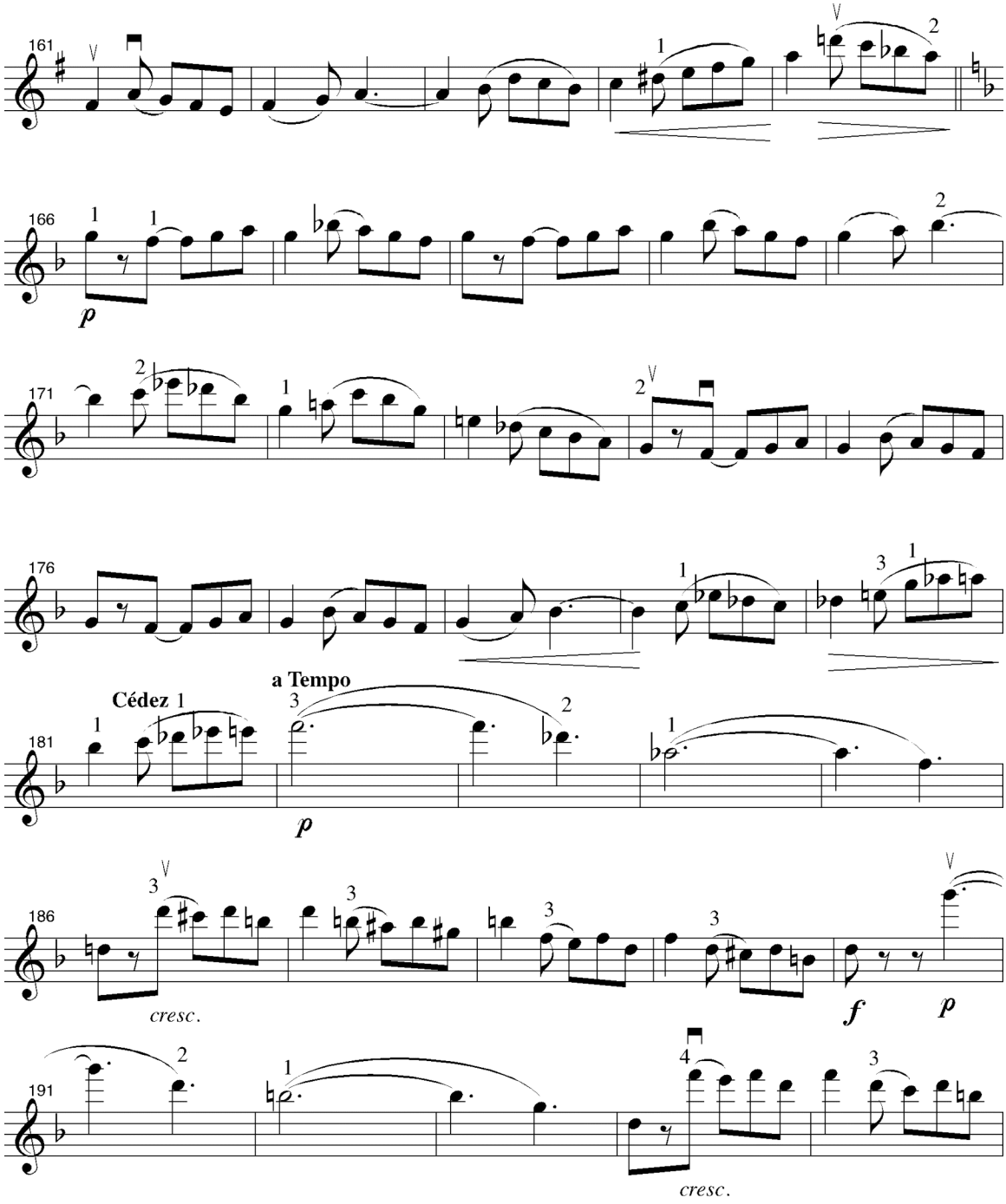
Allegro risoluto ♩.=136

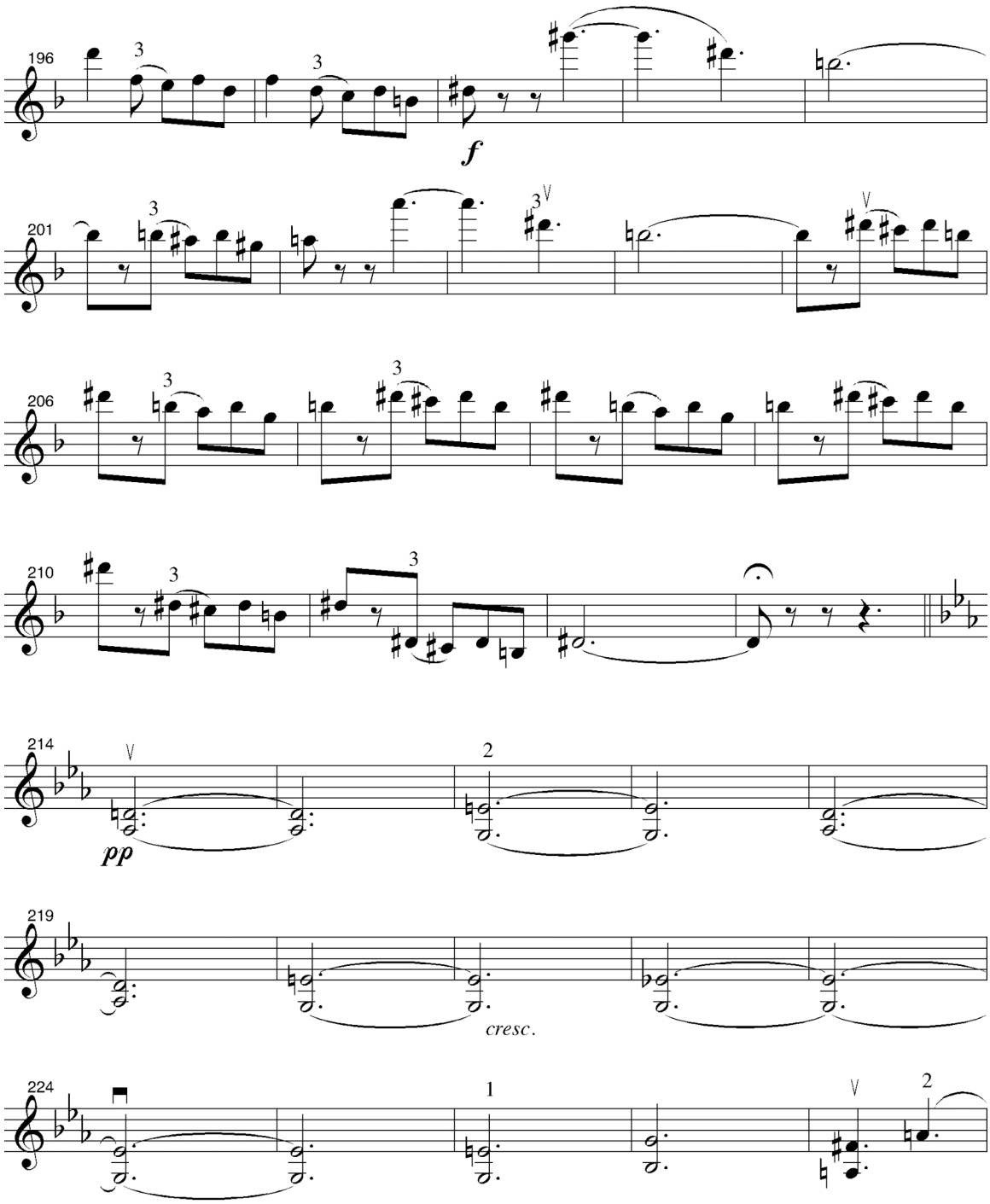


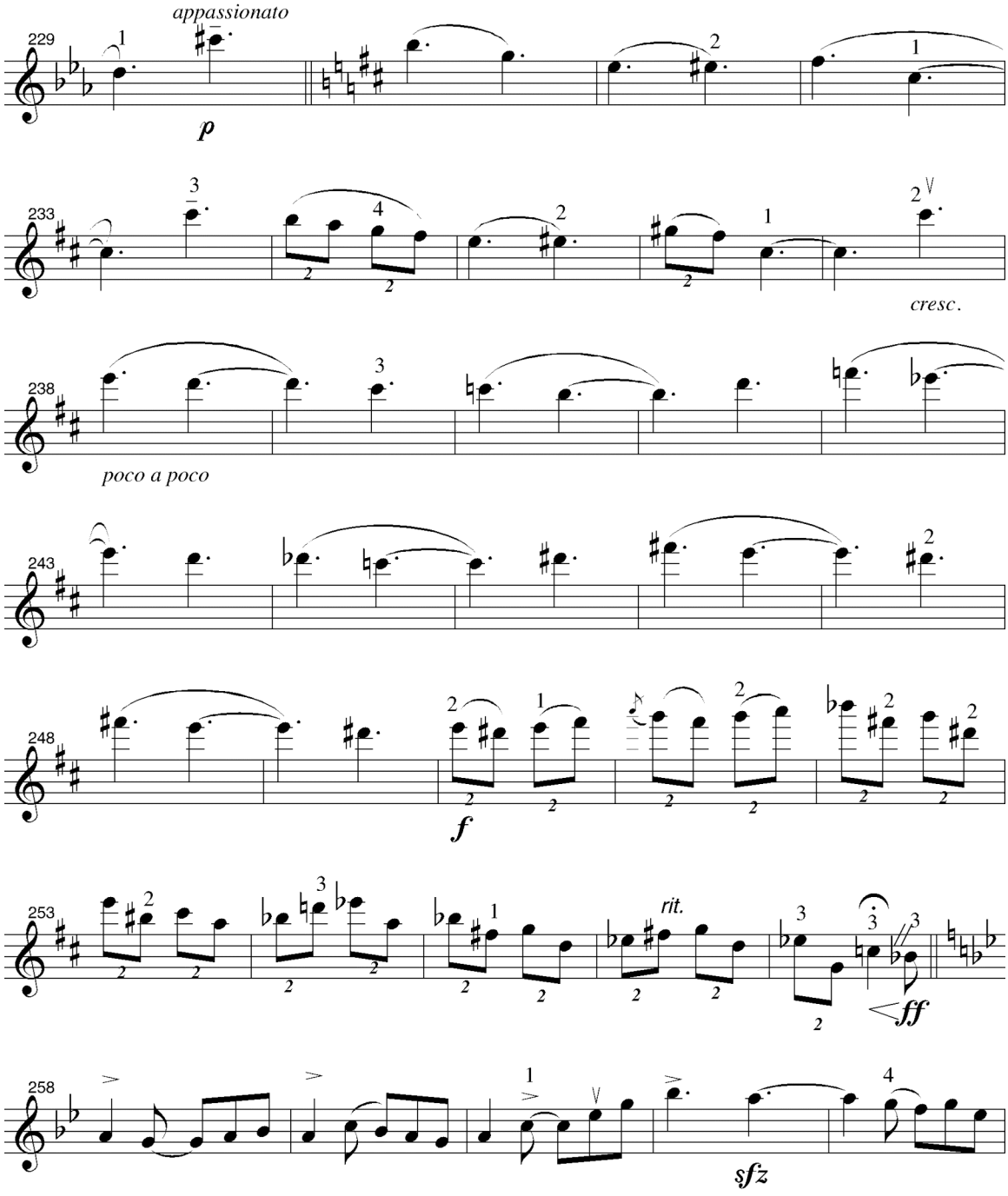

30
poco cresc.
35
mp
dim.
40
cresc.
cresc. molto
45
ff
52
ff
quasi recitativo
ff
57
Poco rit.
61
dim.
p
a Tempo
15

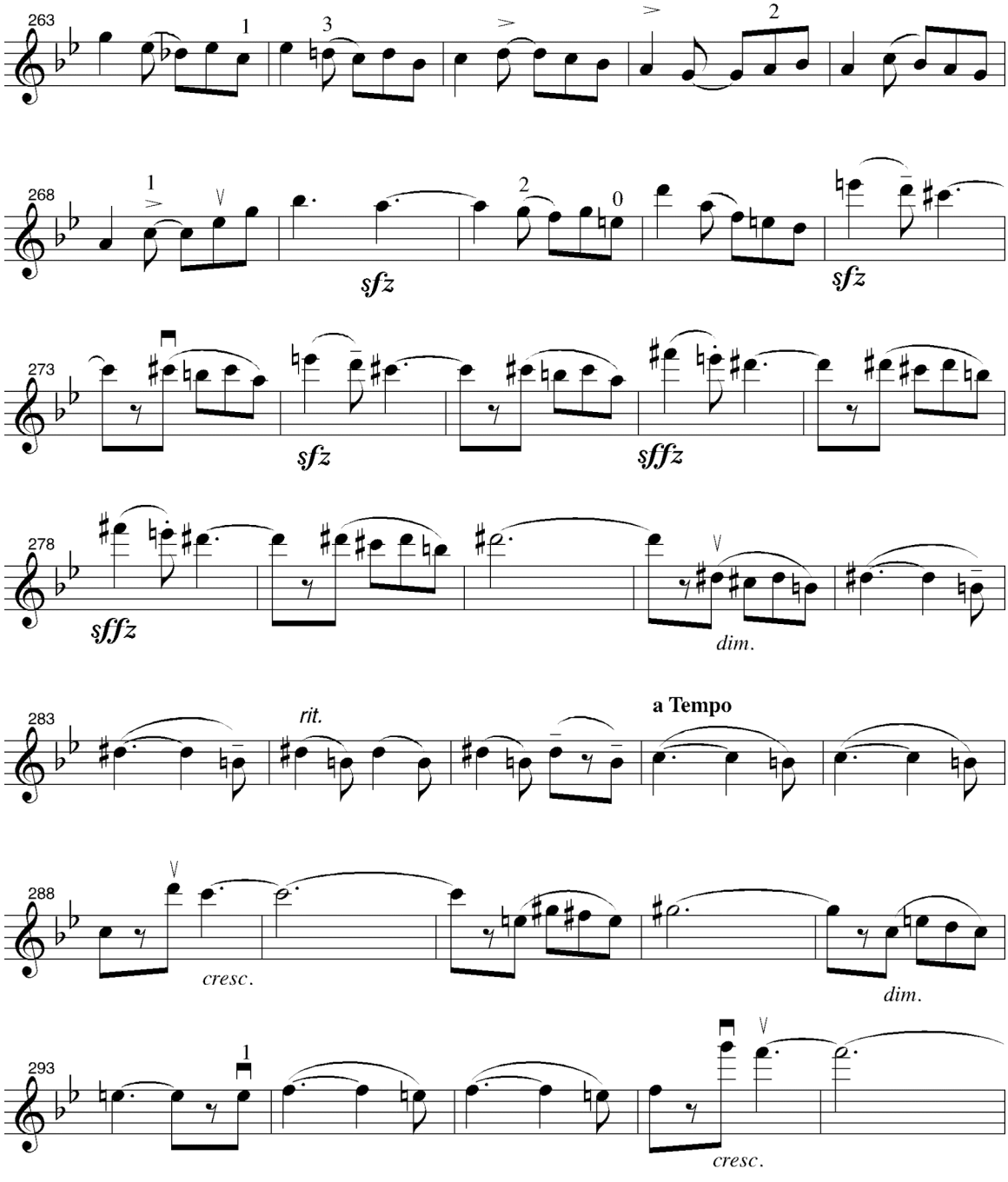

II
80
p dolce
85
cresc.
90
mf
cresc.
95
p
105
p
110
Cédez
115
a Tempo

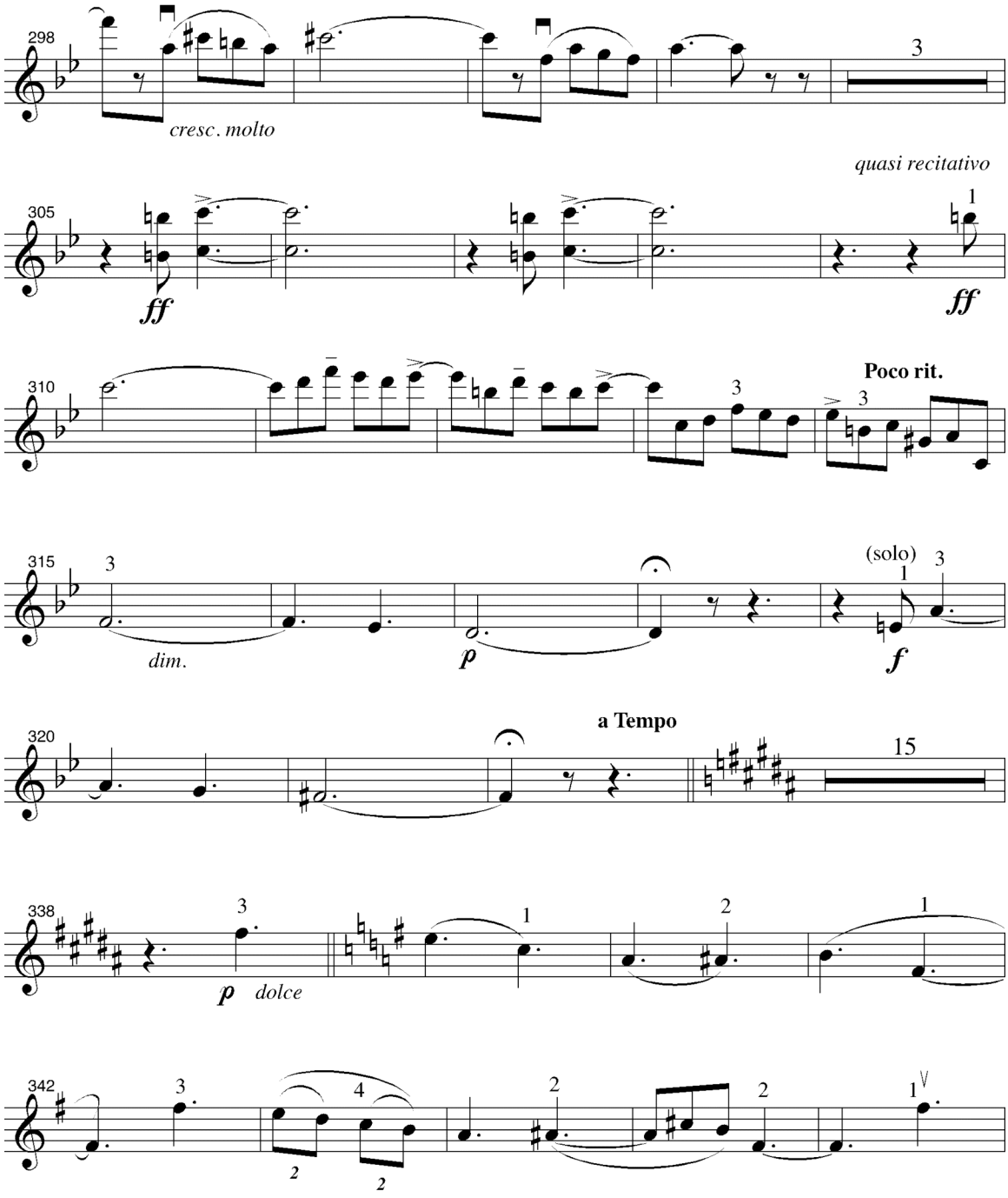

120
4
3
p
128
0
cresc.
1
3
f
133
1 2 2 3
5
3
p
142
cresc.
1
3
147
2
4
1 2 2 3
f
3
p
151
4
156
1
1
V
V


161
166
p
171
176
Cédez
a Tempo
181
p
186
cresc.
f
p
191
cresc.


196
f
201
206
210
214
pp
219
cresc.
224


appassionato
229
p
233
cresc.
238
poco a poco
243
248
f
253
rit.
ff
258
sfz


263
268
sfz
sfz
273
sfz
sffz
278
sffz
dim.
283
rit.
a Tempo
288
cresc.
dim.
293
cresc.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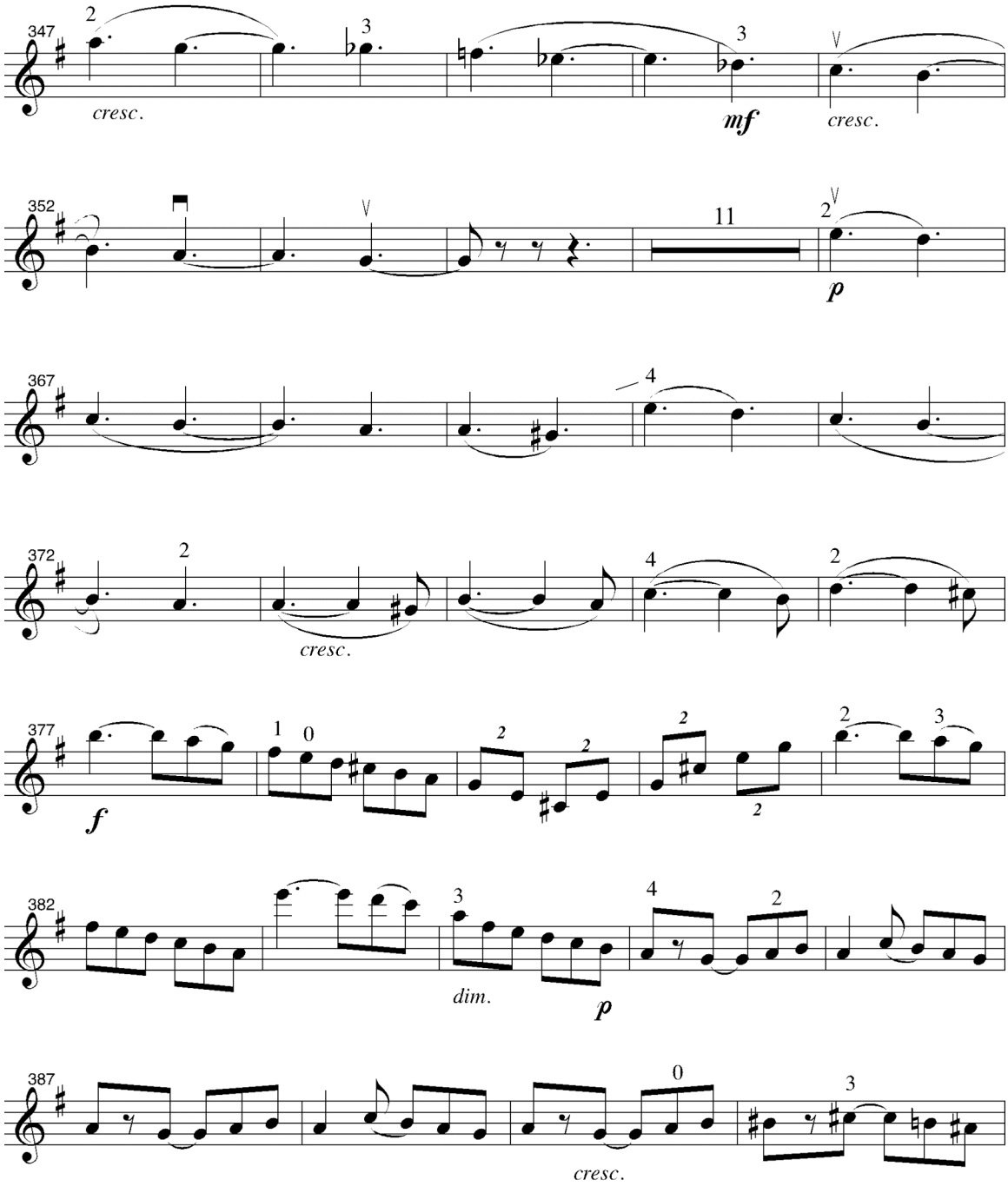
cresc. molto
quasi recitativo
305
ff
ff
310
Poco rit.
315
dim.
p
(solo)
f
320
a Tempo
338
p dolce
342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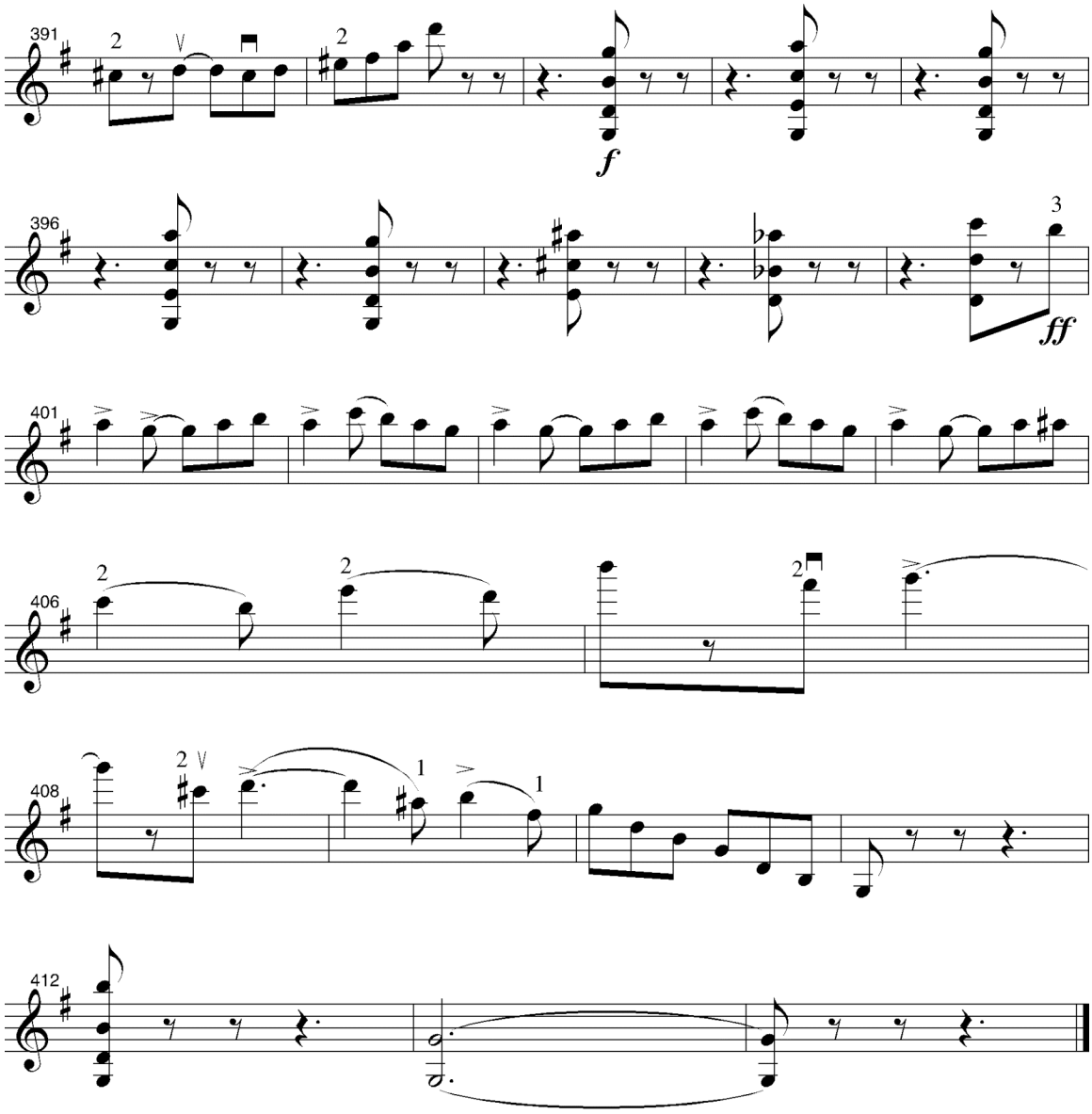
cresc.
mf
cresc.
352
11
p
367
372
cresc.
377
f
382
dim.
p
387
cresc.


391
396
401
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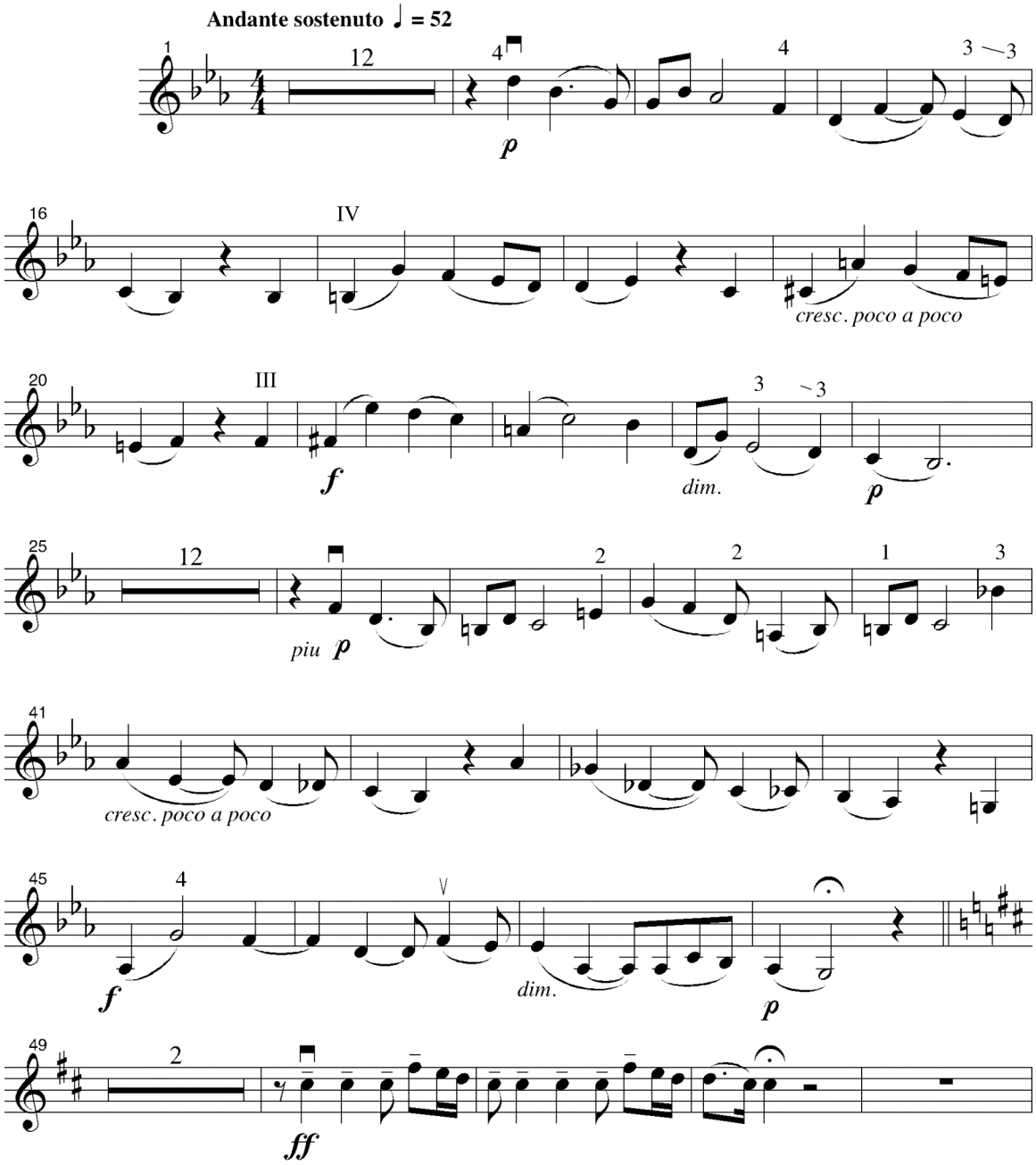
408
412
f
ff

II


Andante sostenuto ♩ = 52
1
12
4
p
4
3
3
16
IV
cresc. poco a poco
20
III
f
dim.
3
3
p
25
12
piu p
2
2
1
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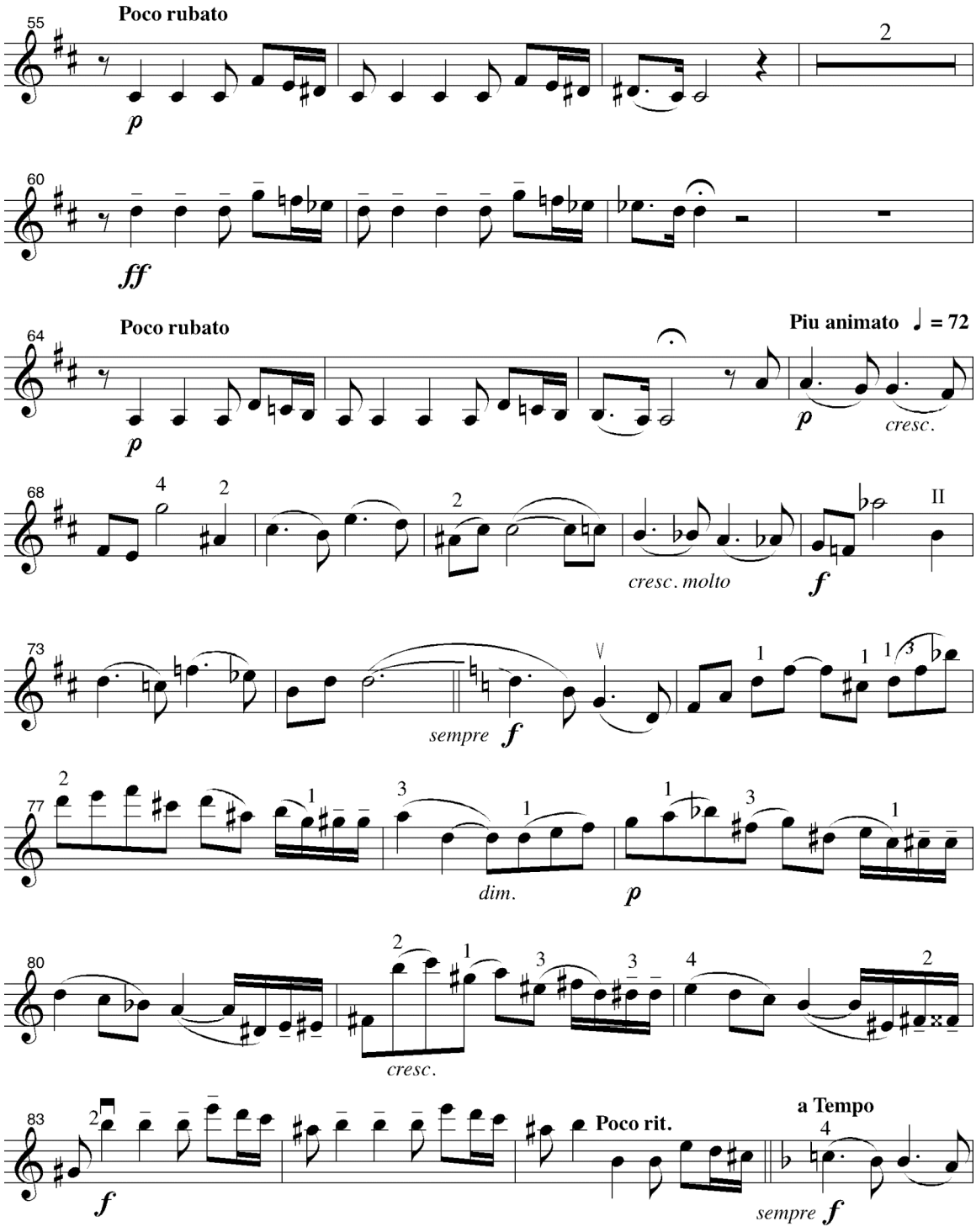
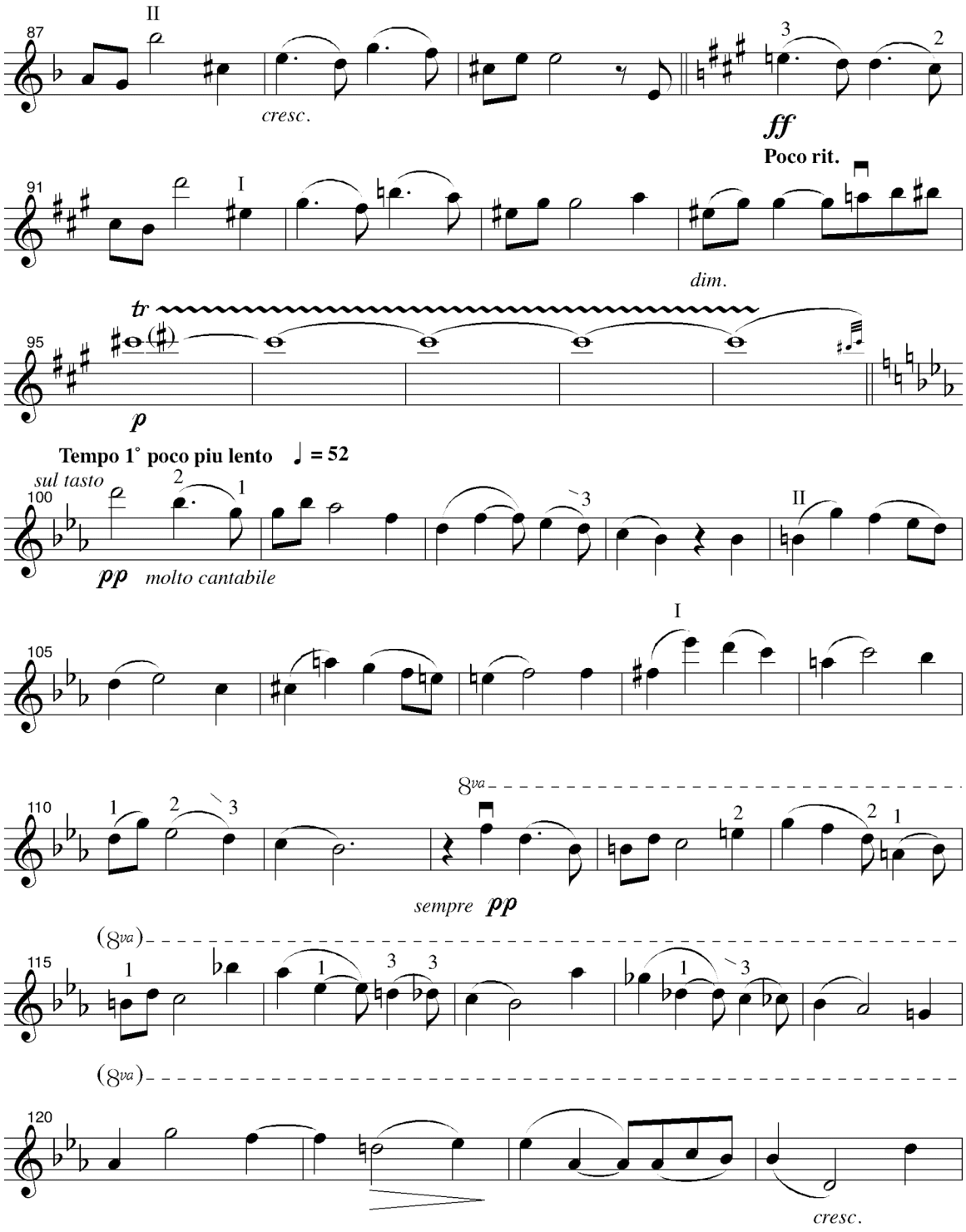
41
cresc. poco a poco
45
4
f
V
dim.
p
49
2
ff


55
Poco rubato
p
2
60
ff
64
Poco rubato
p
Piu animato ♩ = 72
p
cresc.
68
4
2
2
cresc. molto
f
II
73
sempre
f
V
1
1
1
3
77
2
1
3
1
dim.
p
1
3
1
80
2
1
3
3
4
2
cresc.
83
2
f
Poco rit.
a Tempo
4
sempre
f


87
II
cresc.
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Poco rit.
91
I
dim.
tr
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Tempo 1° poco piu lento ♩ = 52
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1
3
II
pp molto cantabile
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I
110
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3
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1
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3
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3
(8va)
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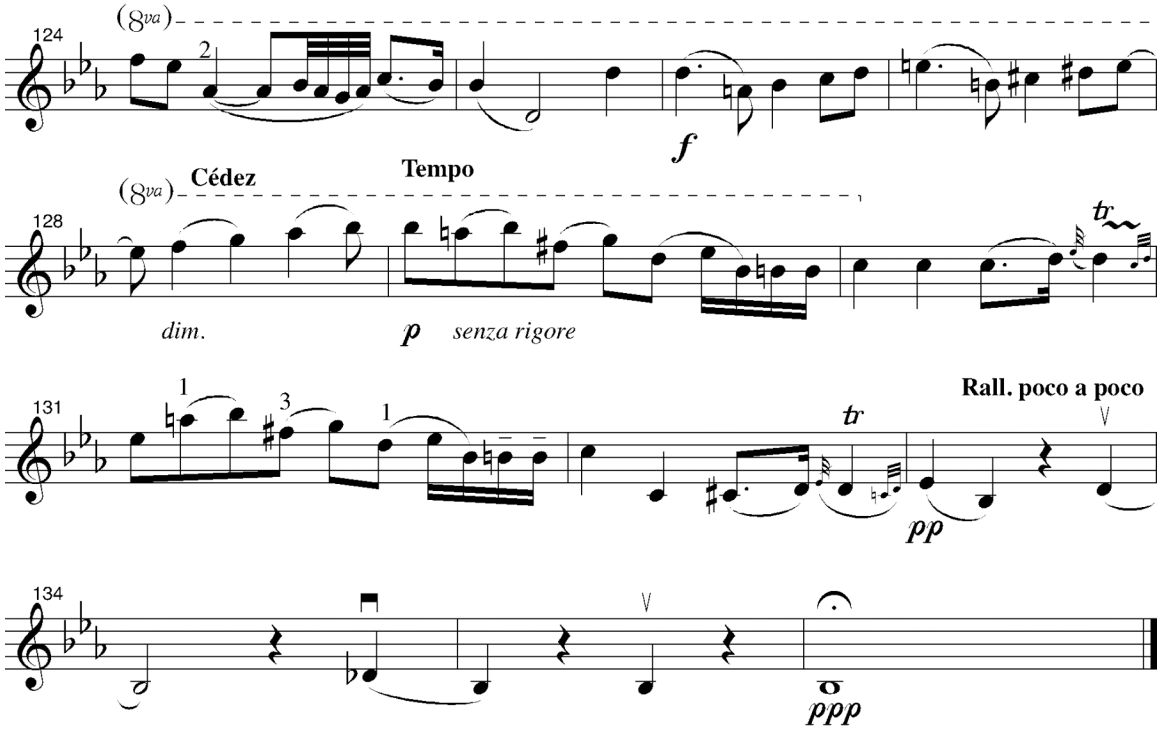
cresc.


(8va)
124
2
f
Cédez
Tempo
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tr
dim.
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senza rigore
Rall. poco a poco
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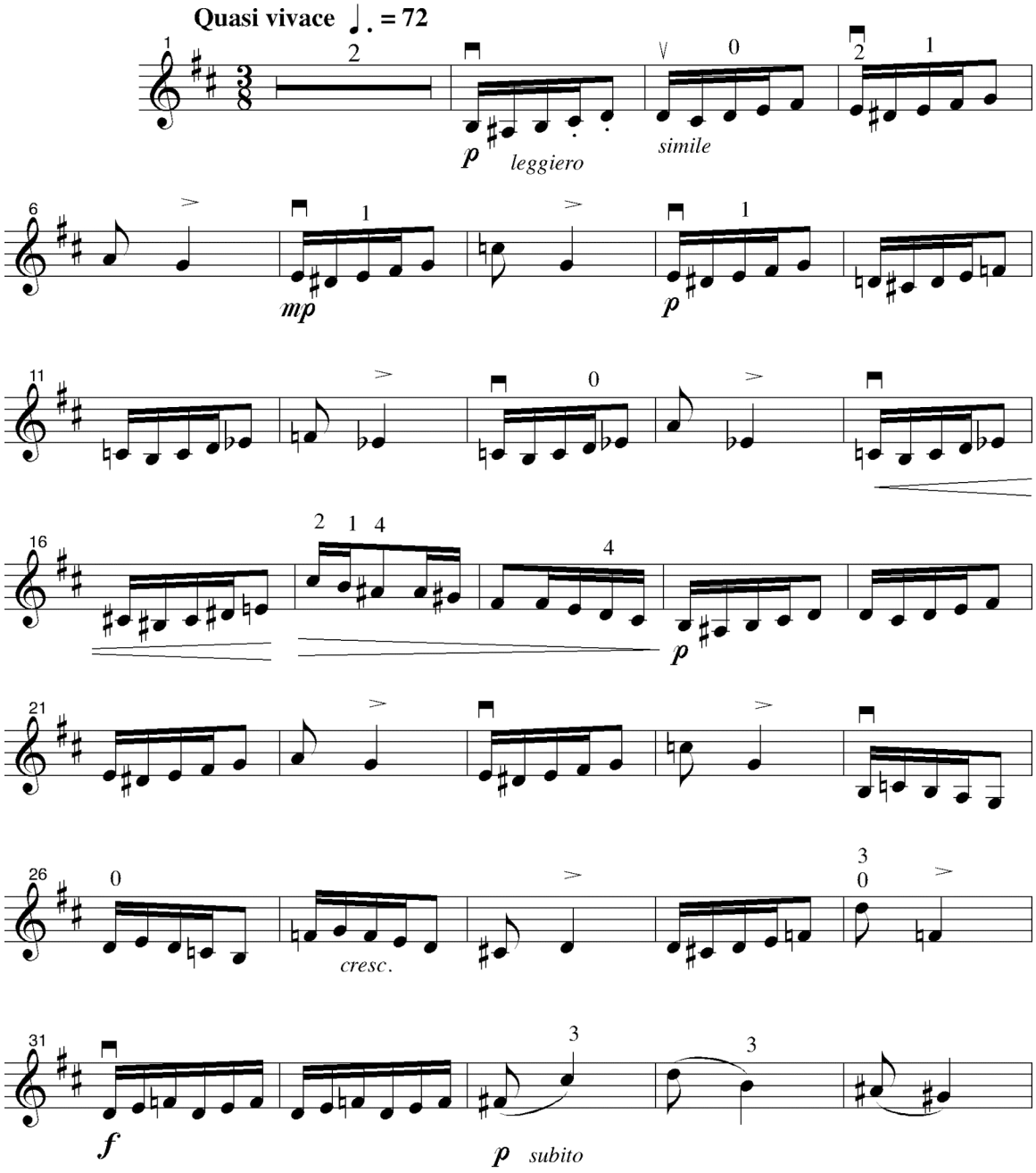
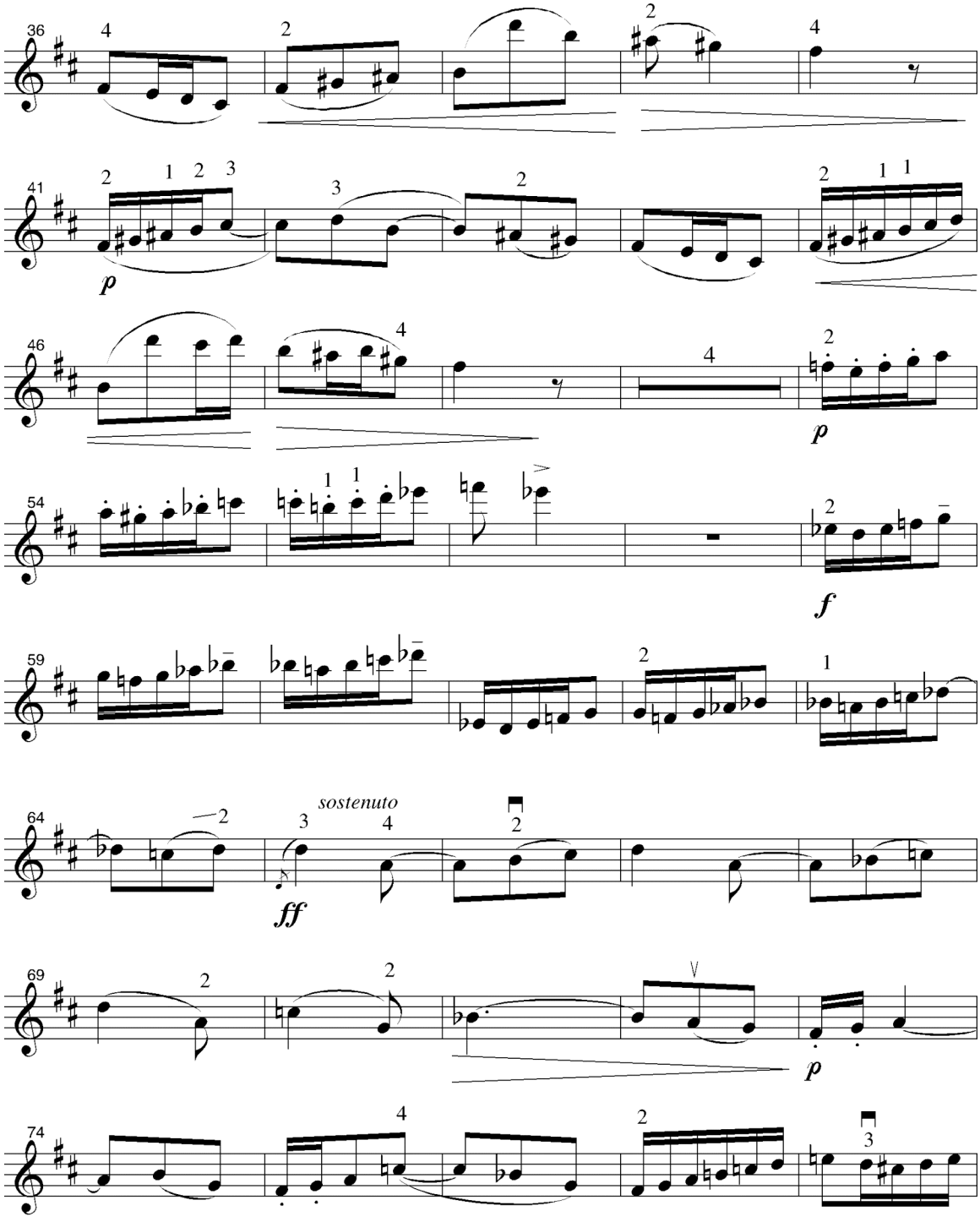
1
3
1
tr
pp
134
ppp

III

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69
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sostenuto
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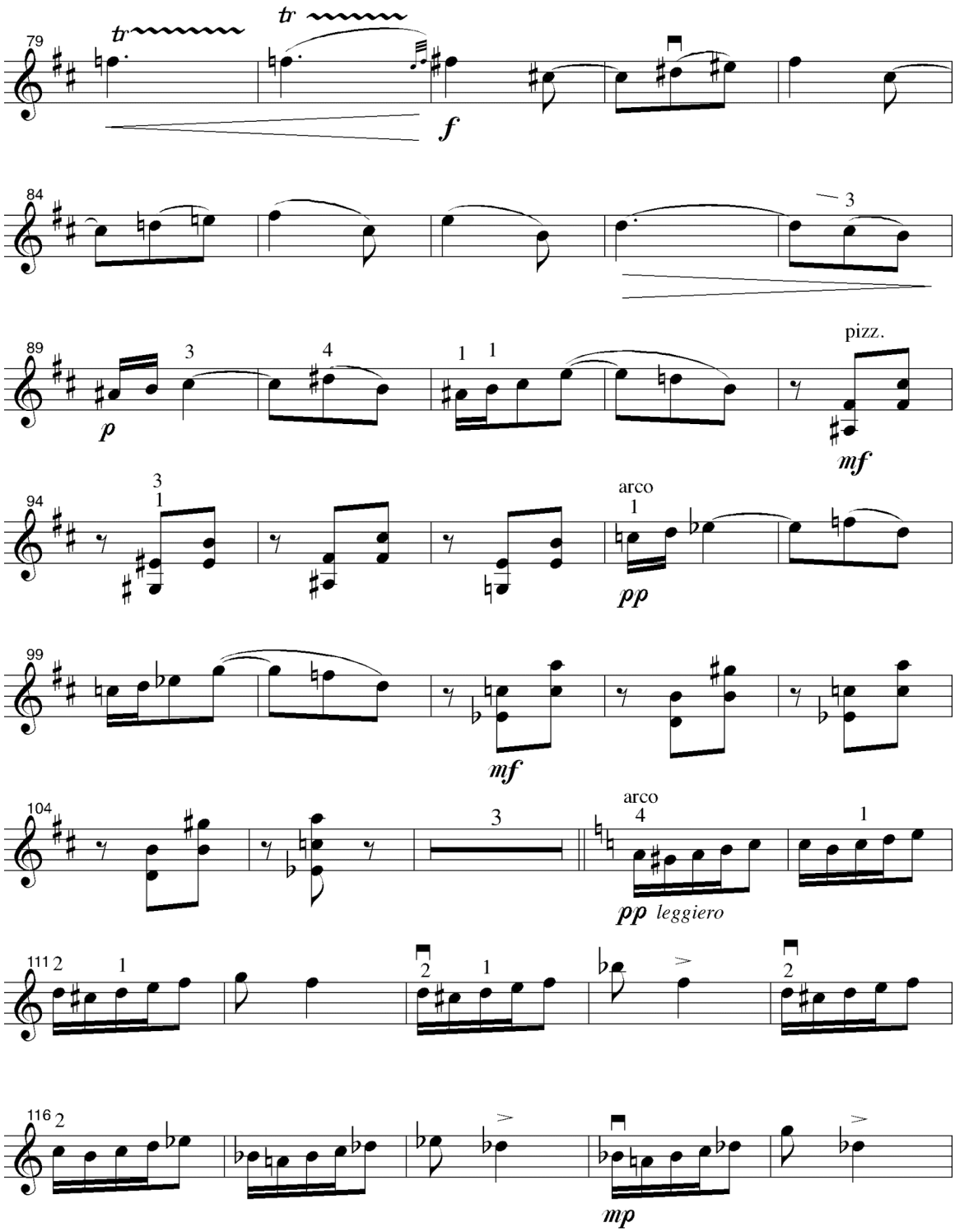
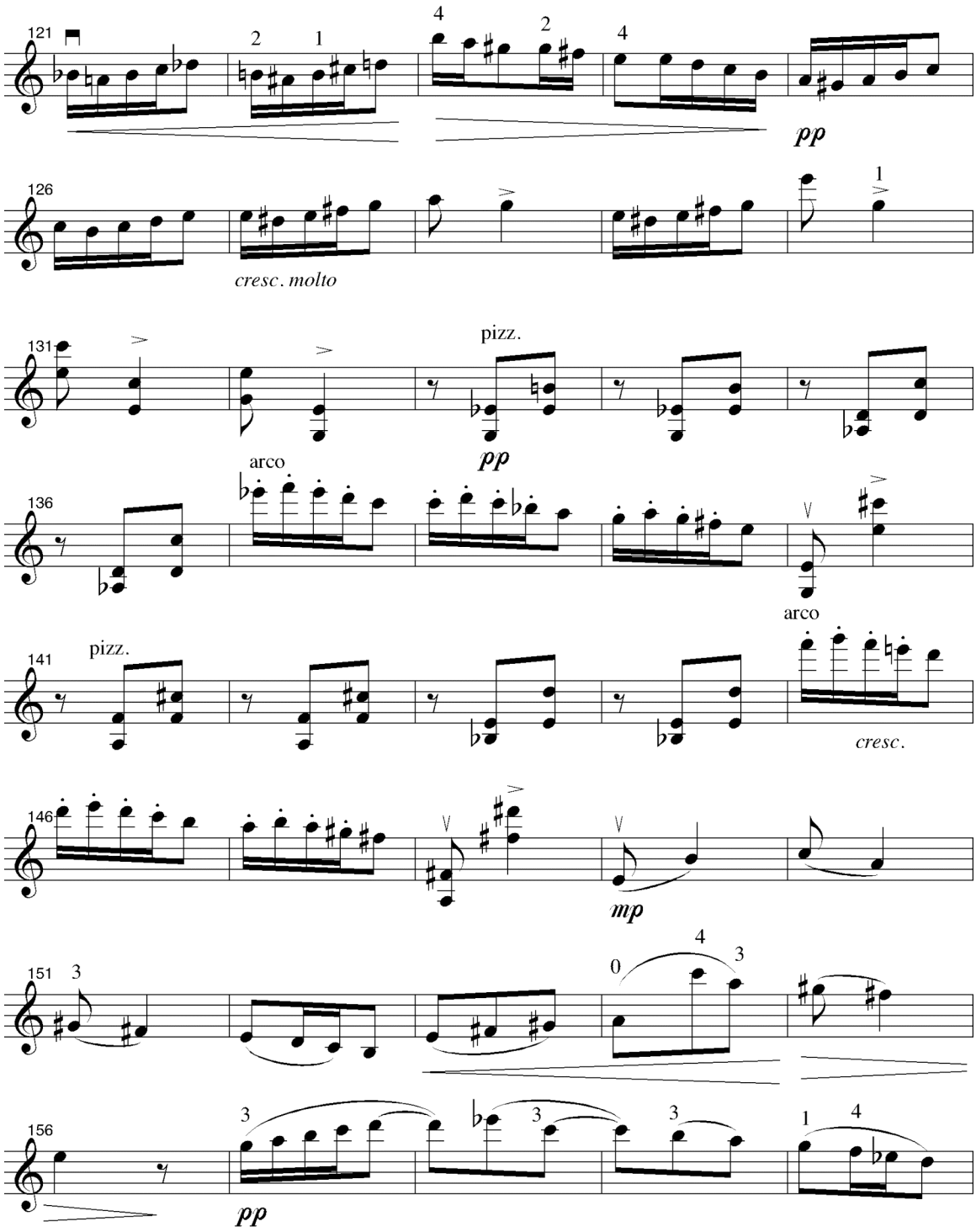
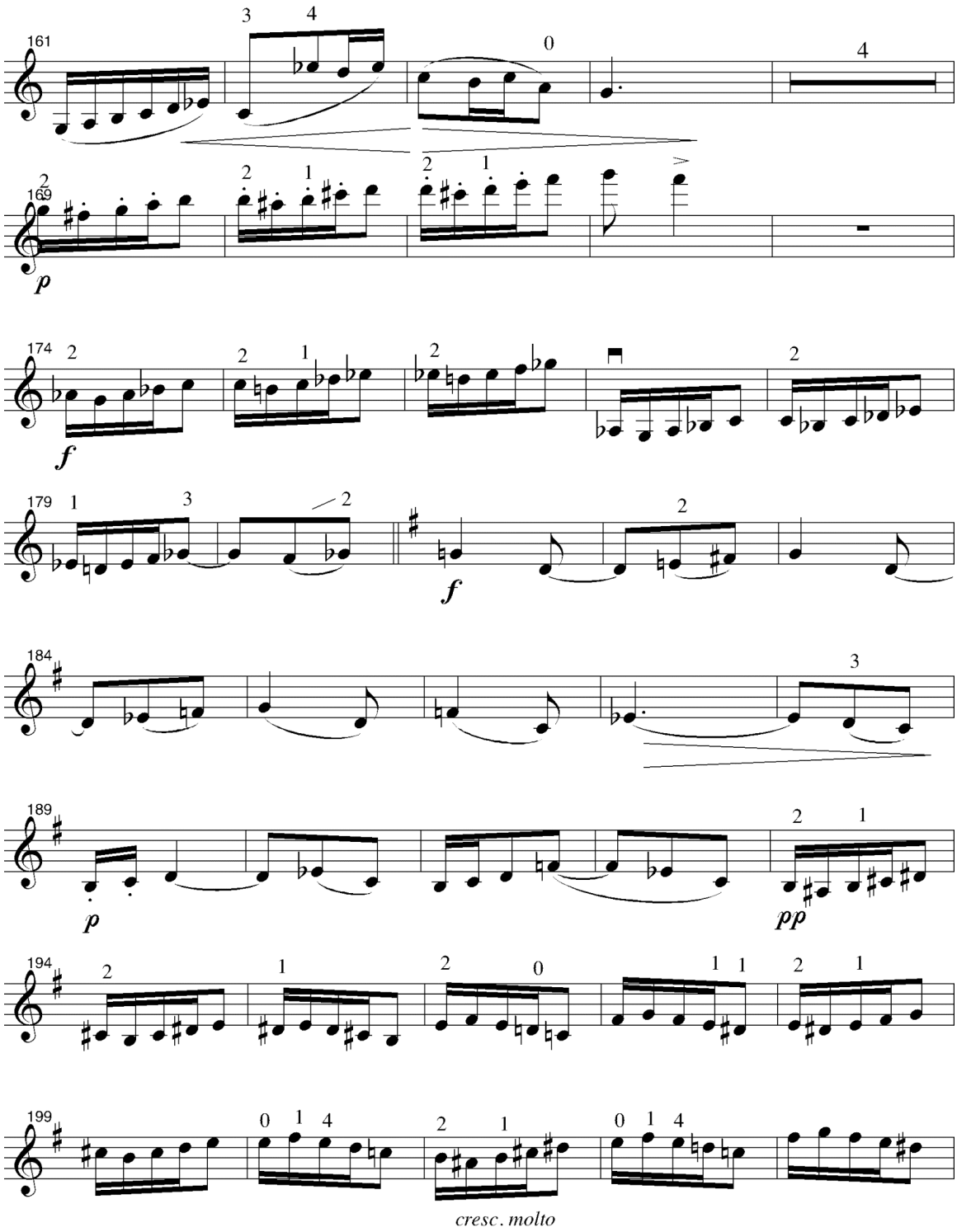
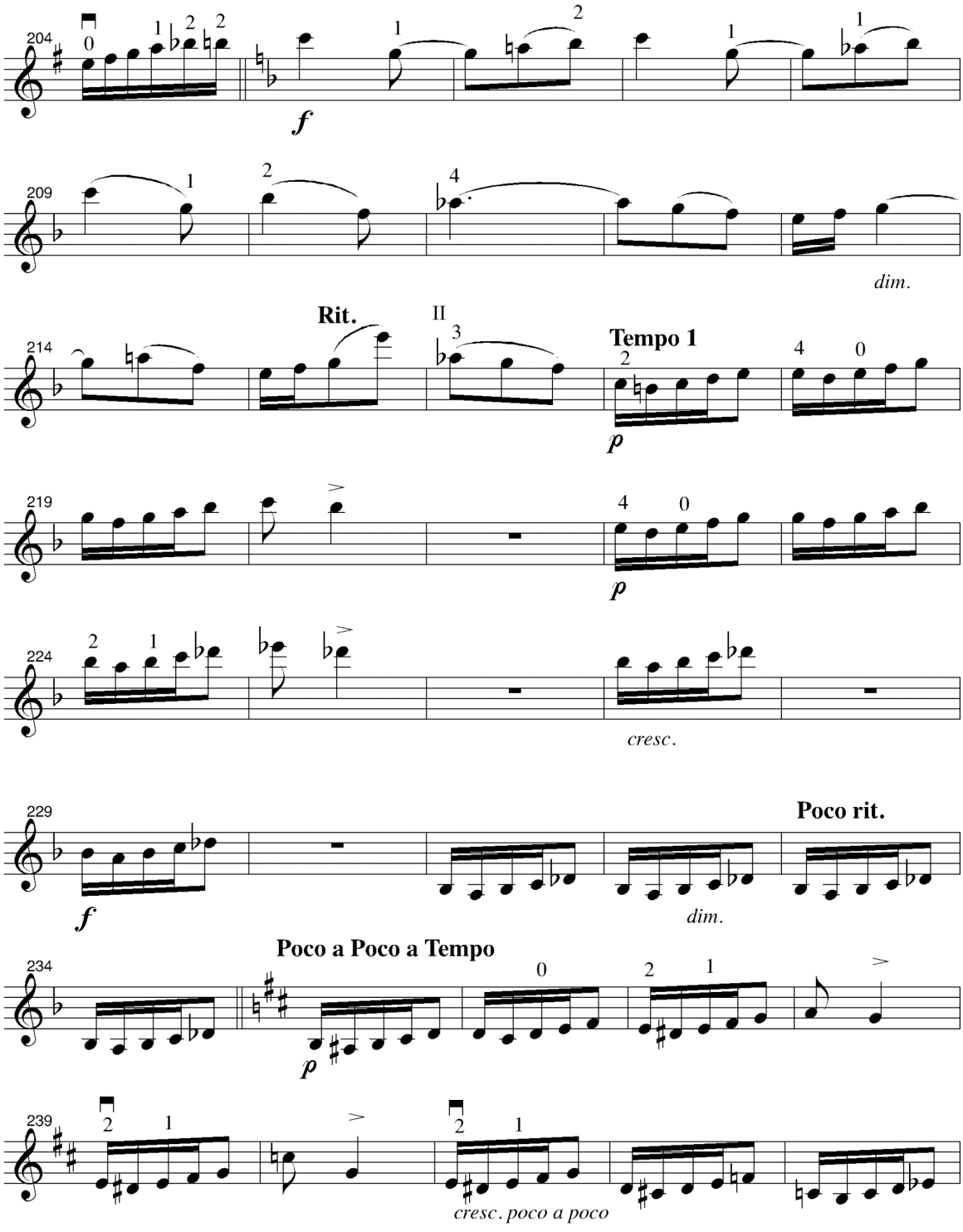
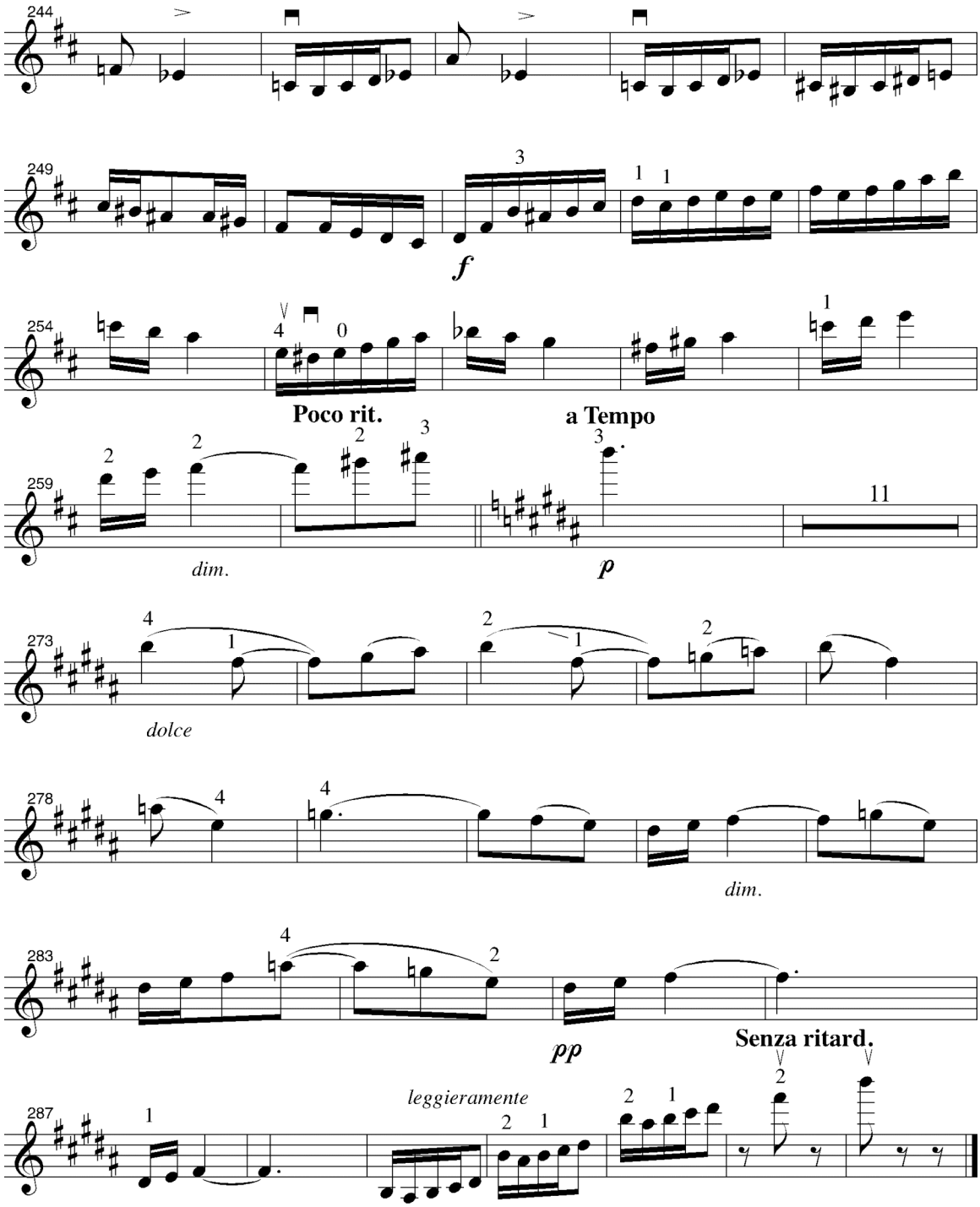
ff
f


79
tr
tr
f
84
3
89
p
3
4
1
1
pizz.
mf
94
3
1
arco
1
pp
99
mf
104
3
arco
4
1
pp leggiero
111
2
1
2
1
2
116
2
mp

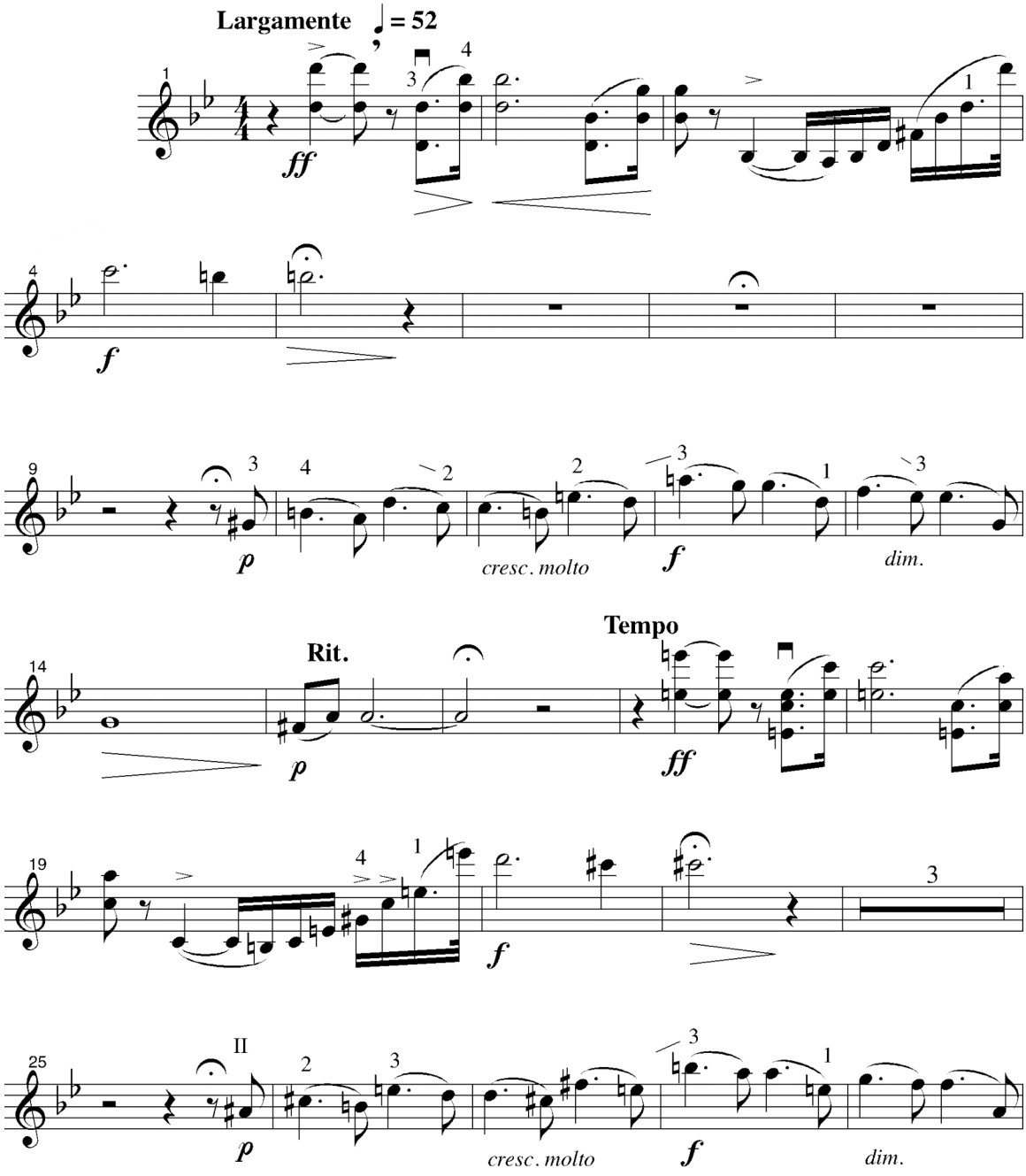

121
2
1
4
2
4
pp
126
cresc. molto
1
131
pizz.
pp
arco
136
arco
141
pizz.
cresc.
146
mp
151
3
0
4
3
156
3
pp
3
3
1
4

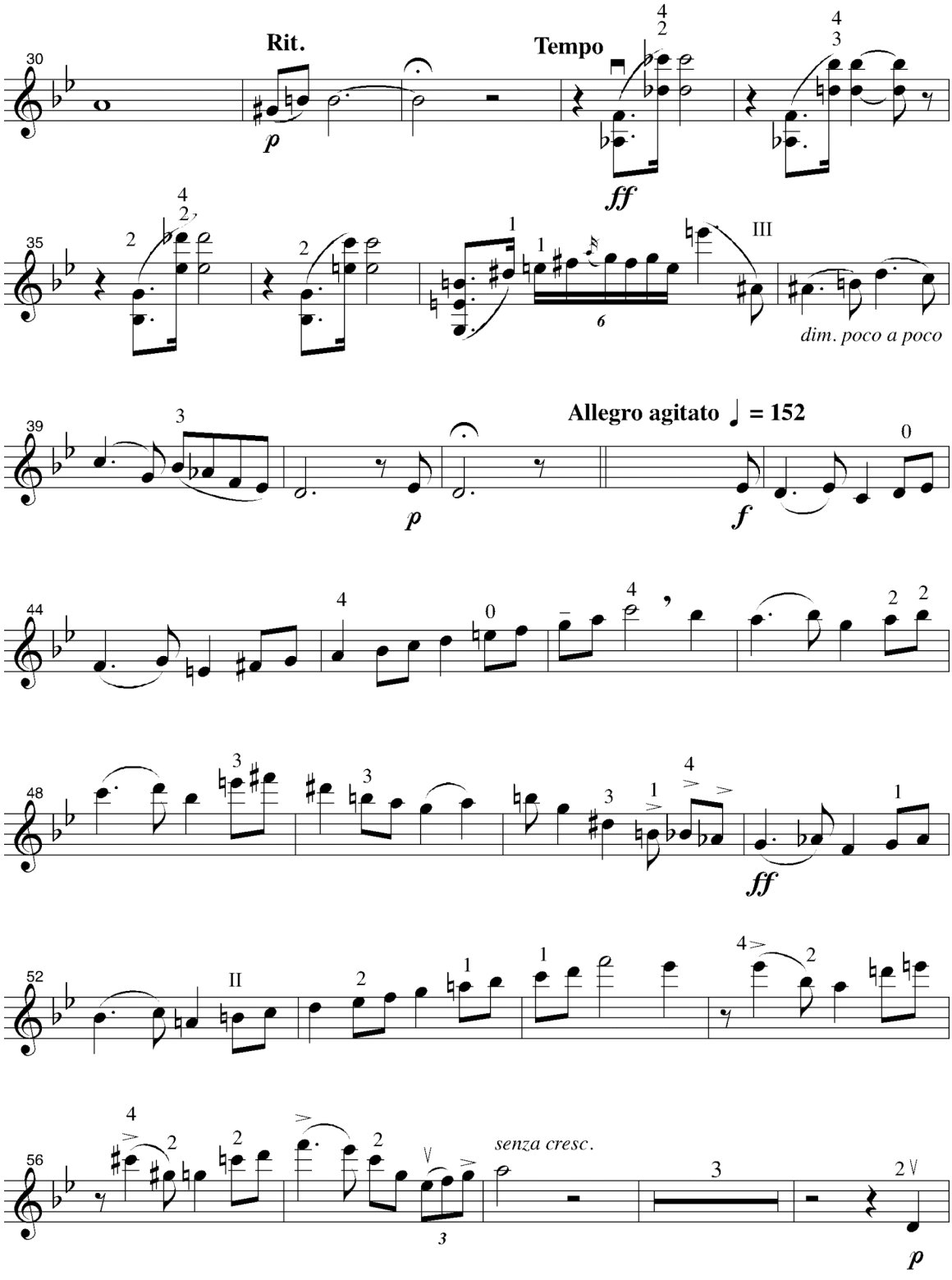

161
169
174
179
184
189
194
199
p
f
f
p
pp
cresc. molto

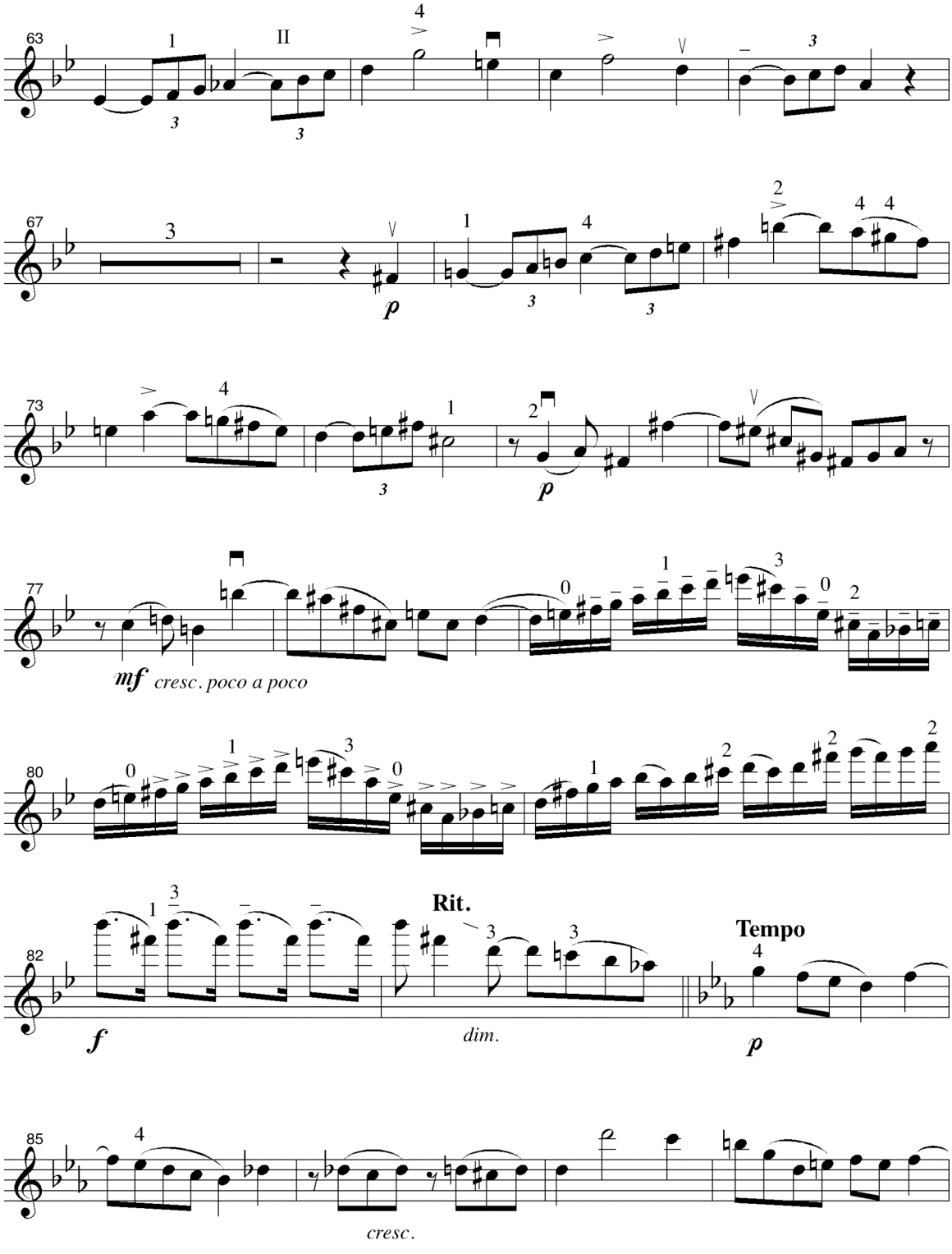

204
f
209
dim.
Rit.
II
Tempo 1
214
p
219
p
224
cresc.
229
f
Poco rit.
dim.
Poco a Poco a Tempo
234
p
239
cresc. poco a poco

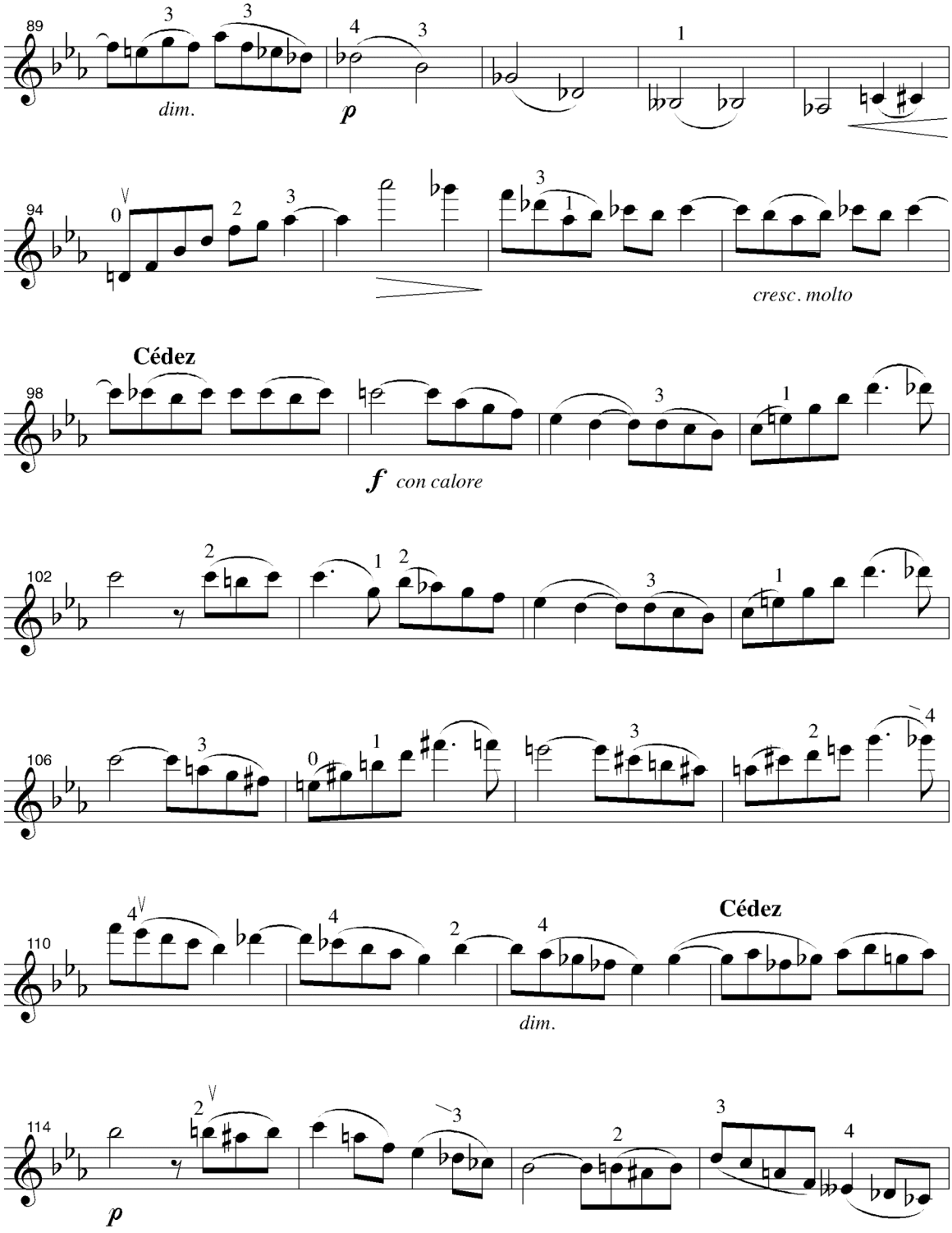

244
249
f
254
Poco rit.
a Tempo
259
dim.
p
273
dolce
278
dim.
283
pp
Senza ritard.
287
leggieramente

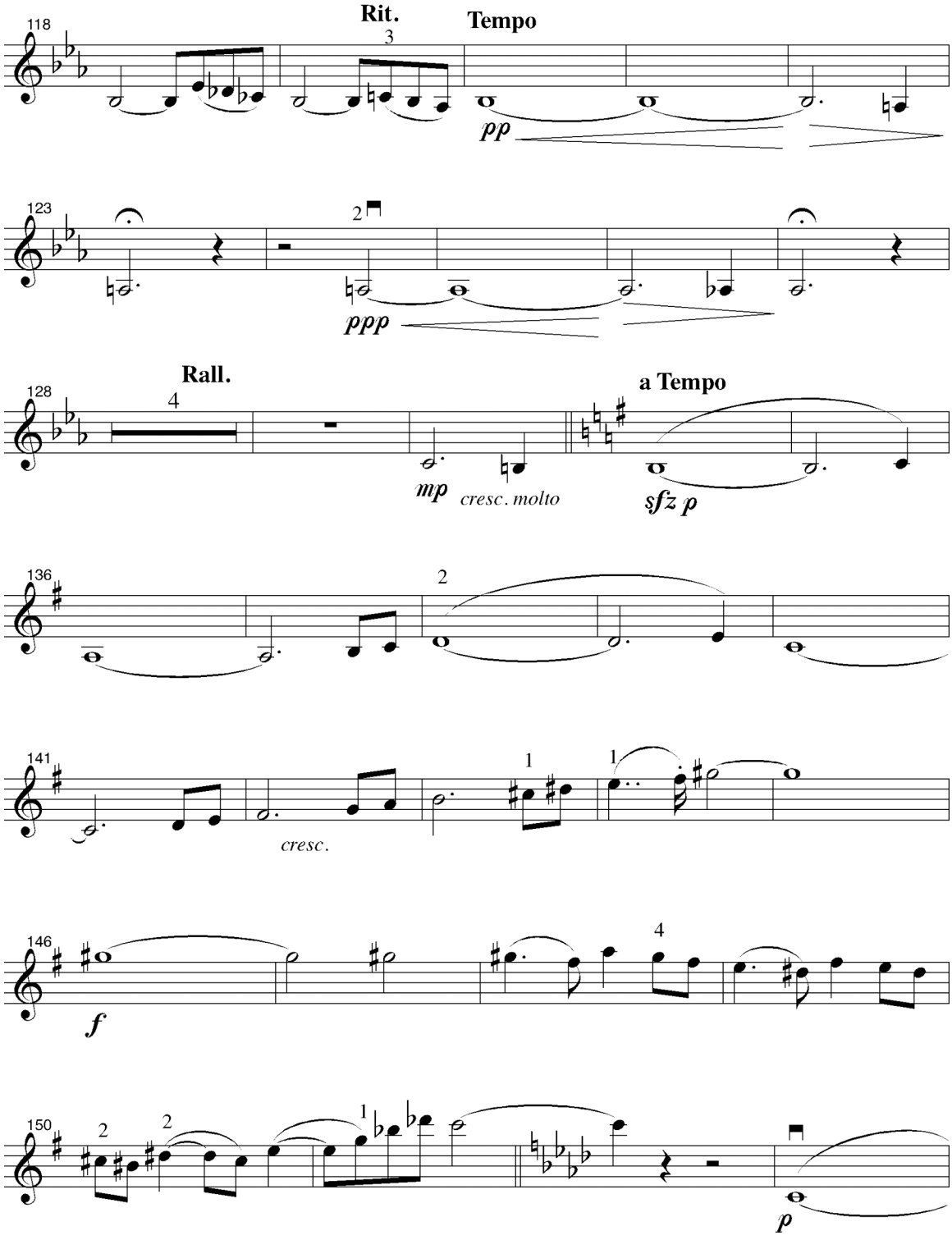
IV

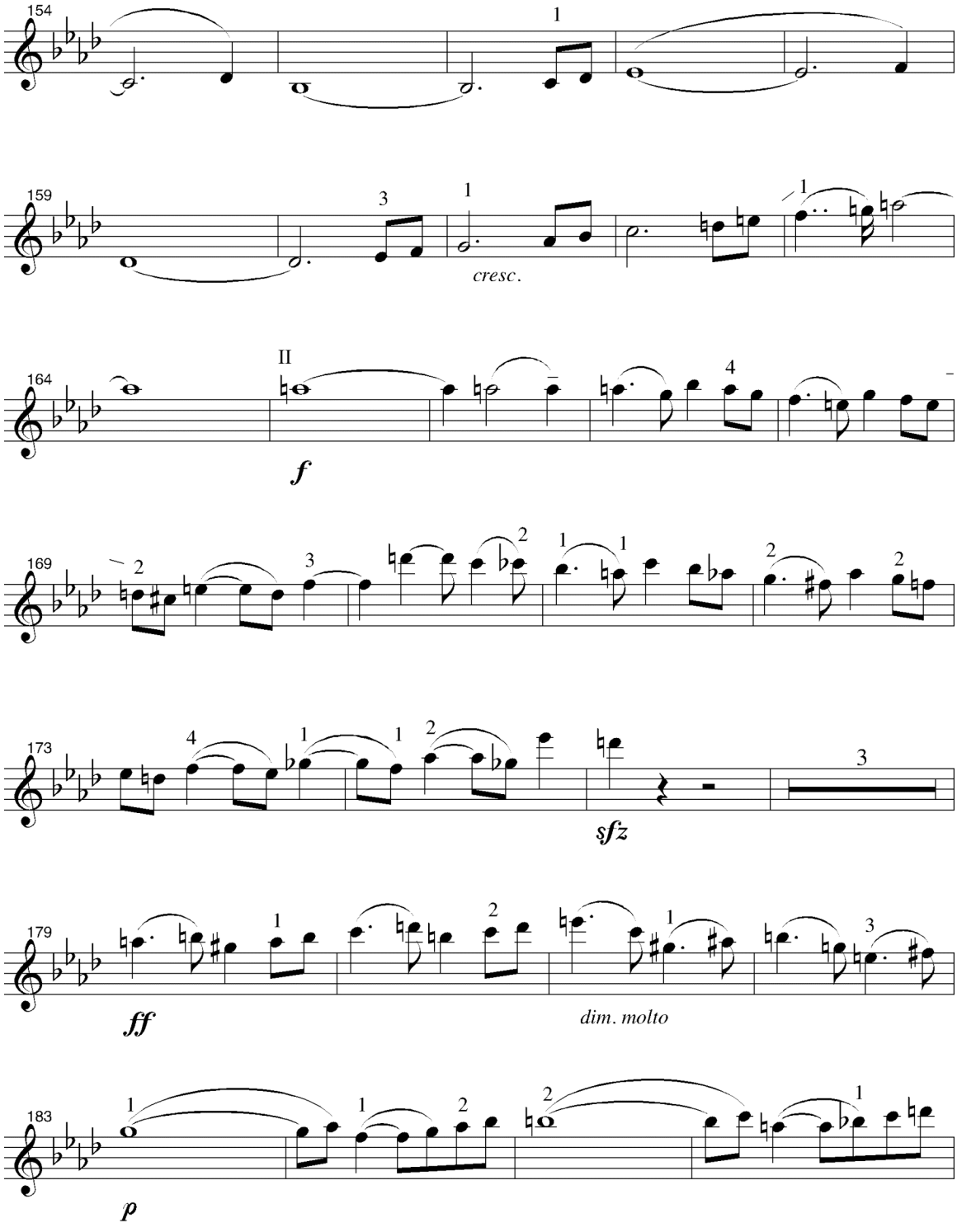

Largamente ♩. = 52
ff
f
p
cresc. molto
f
dim.
Rit.
Tempo
p
ff
f
II
p
cresc. molto
f
dim.

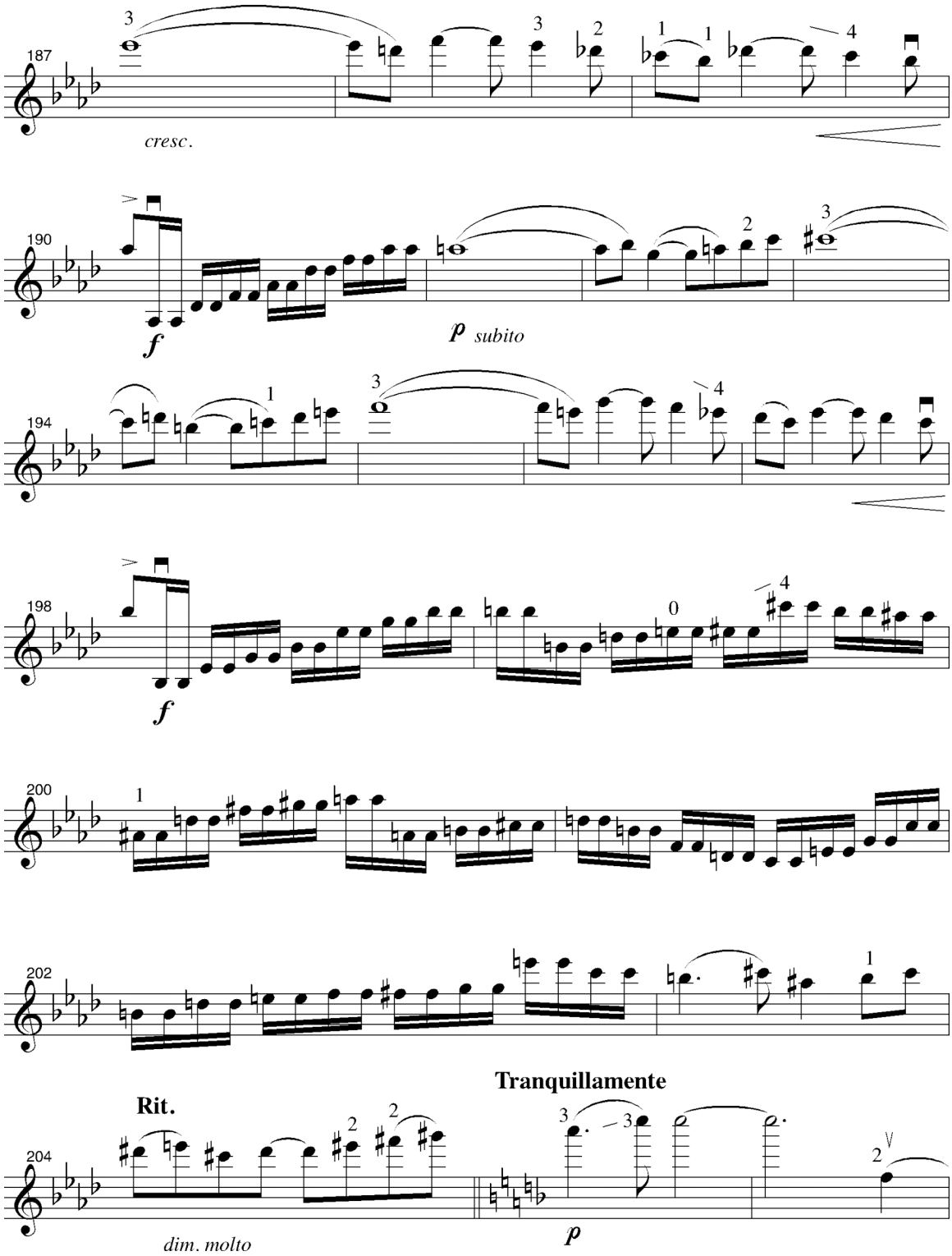

30
Rit.
Tempo
35
dim. poco a poco
39
Allegro agitato ♩ = 152
44
48
52
56
senza cresc.

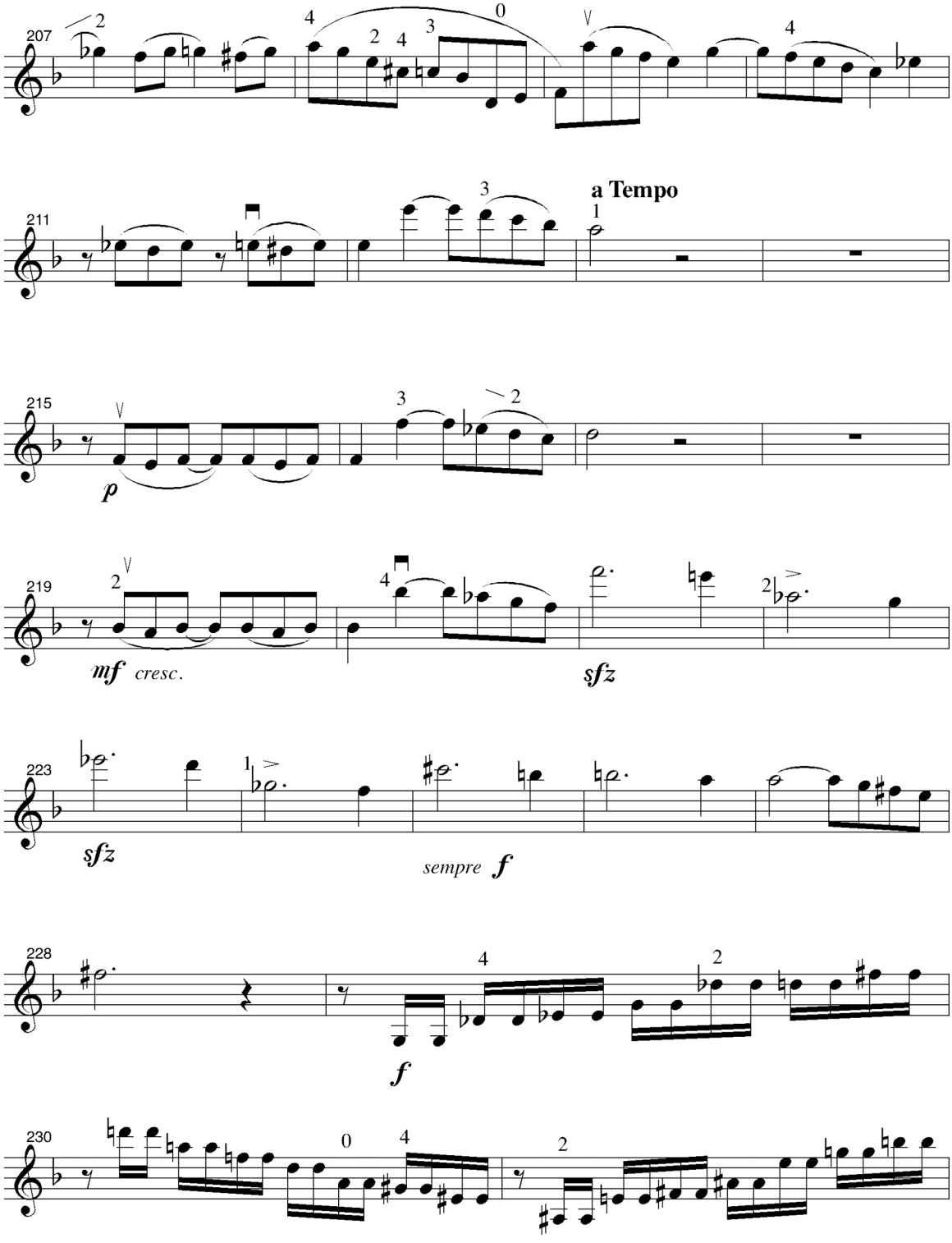

63
67
73
77
mf cresc. poco a poco
80
82
f
Rit.
dim.
Tempo
p
85
cresc.

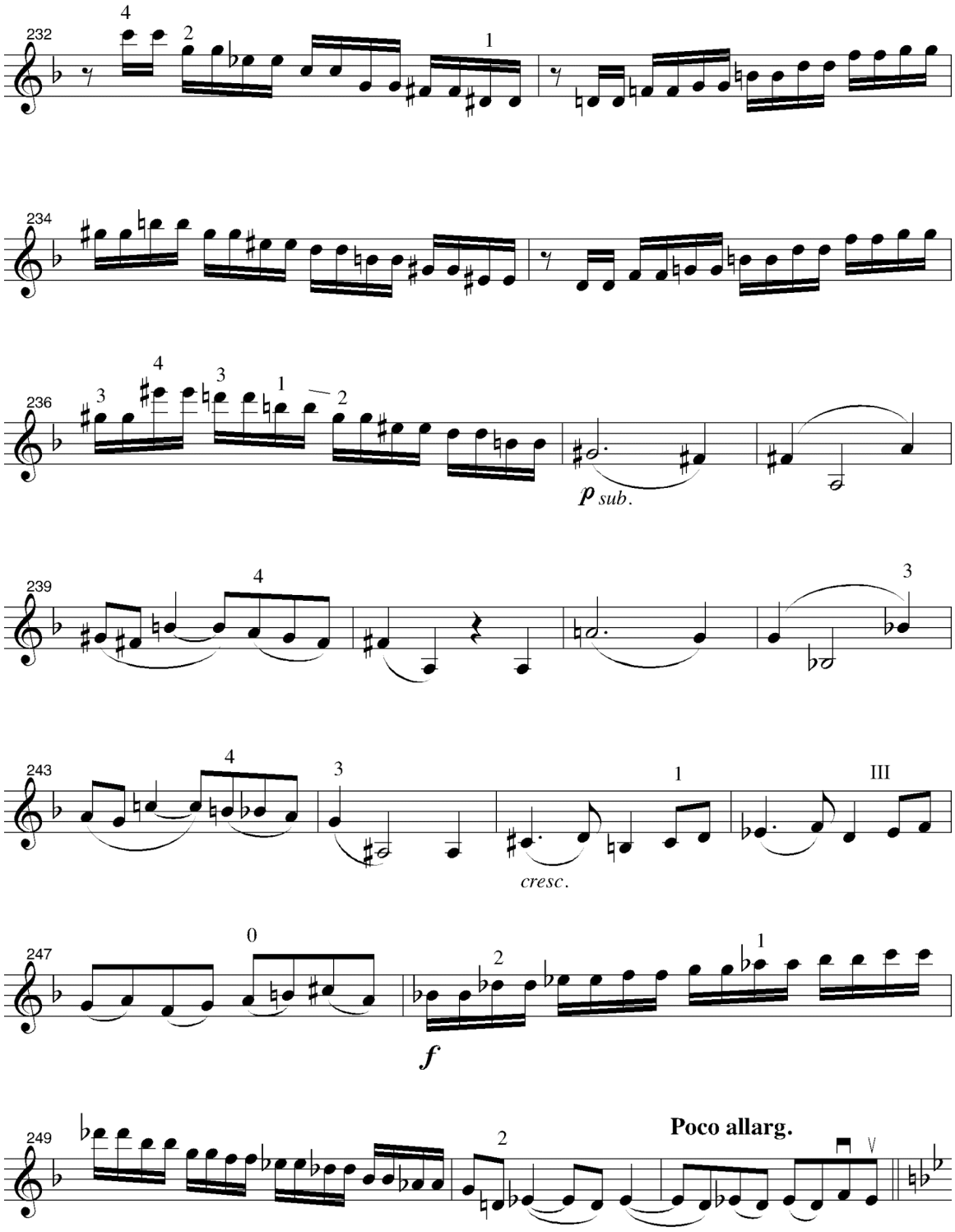

89
dim.
p
94
cresc. molto
Cédez
98
f con calore
102
106
110
Cédez
dim.
114
p

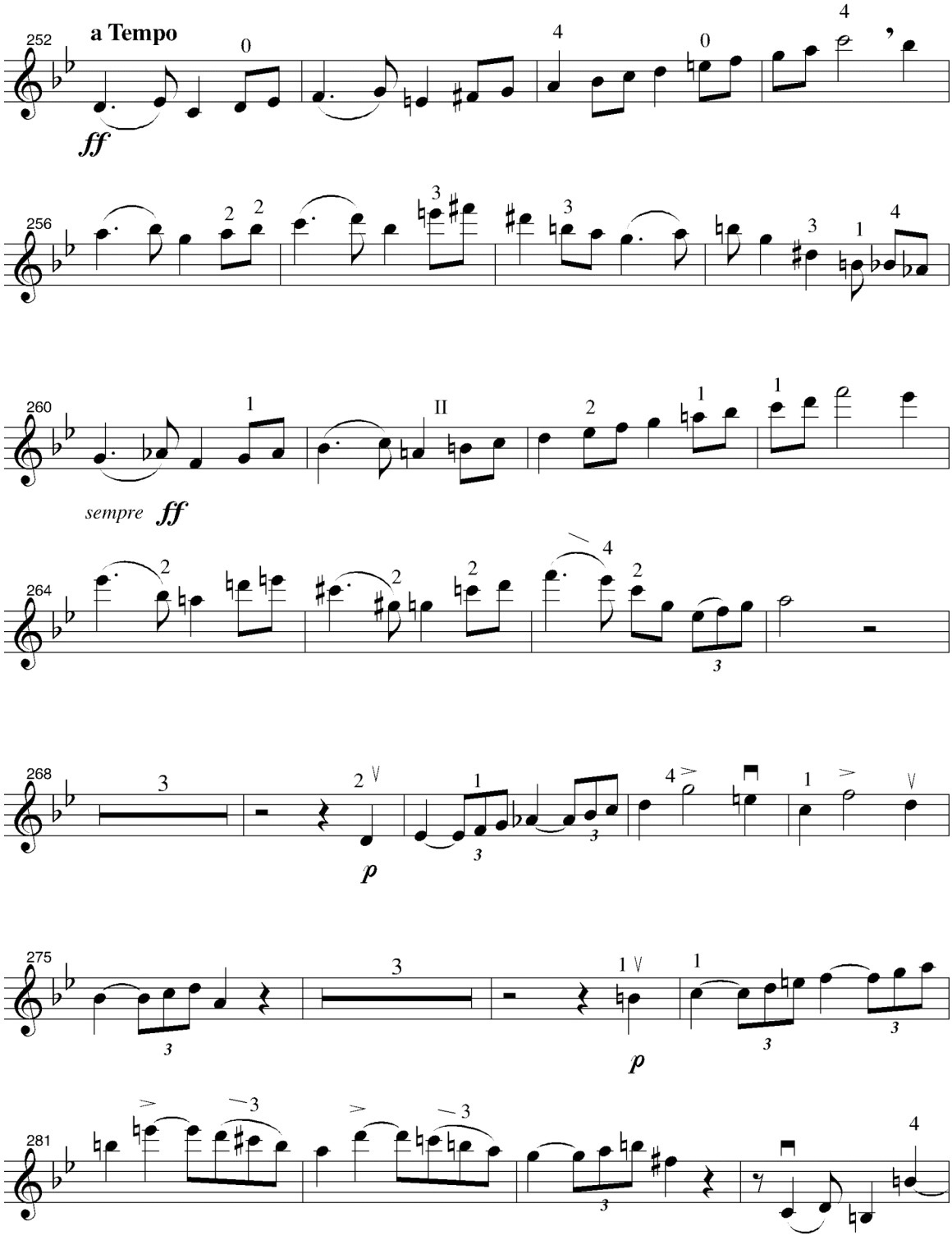

118
Rit.
Tempo
3
pp
123
2
ppp
128
Rall.
4
mp
cresc. molto
a Tempo
sfz p
136
2
141
cresc.
1
1
146
f
4
150
2
2
1
p

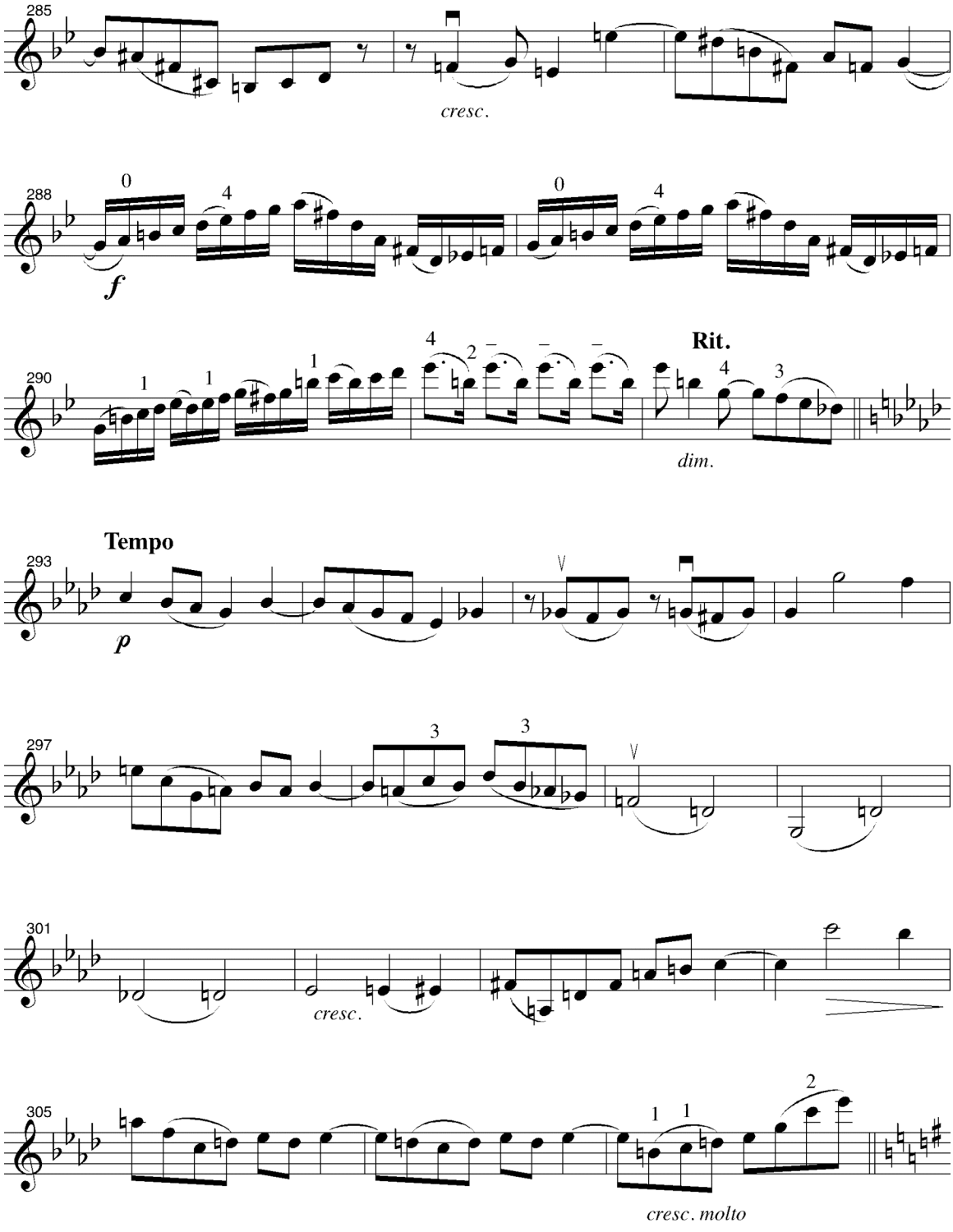

154
159
cresc.
164
II
f
169
173
sfz
179
ff
dim. molto
183
p

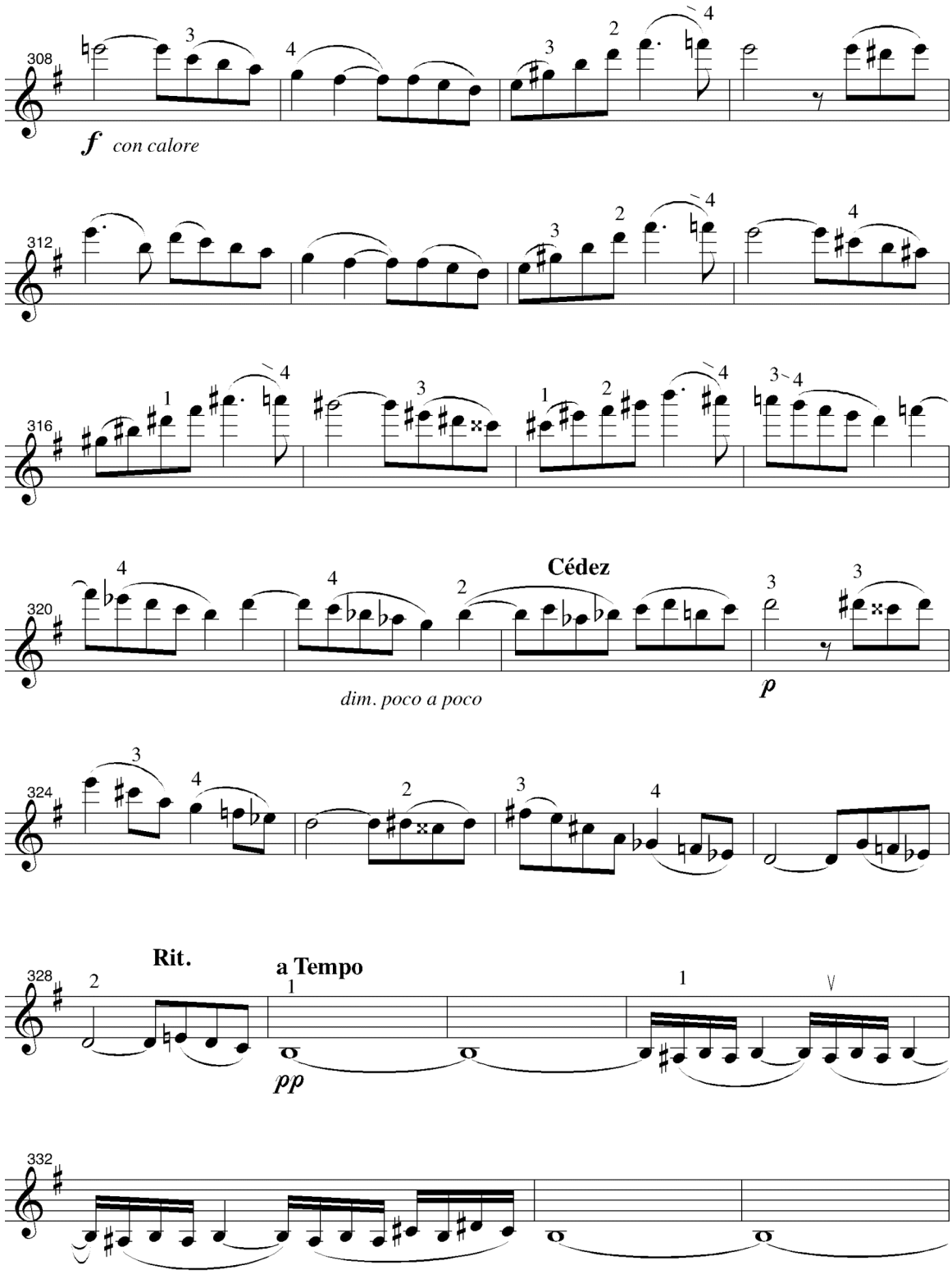

187
cresc.
190
f
p subito
194
198
f
200
202
Rit.
Tranquillamente
204
dim. molto
p

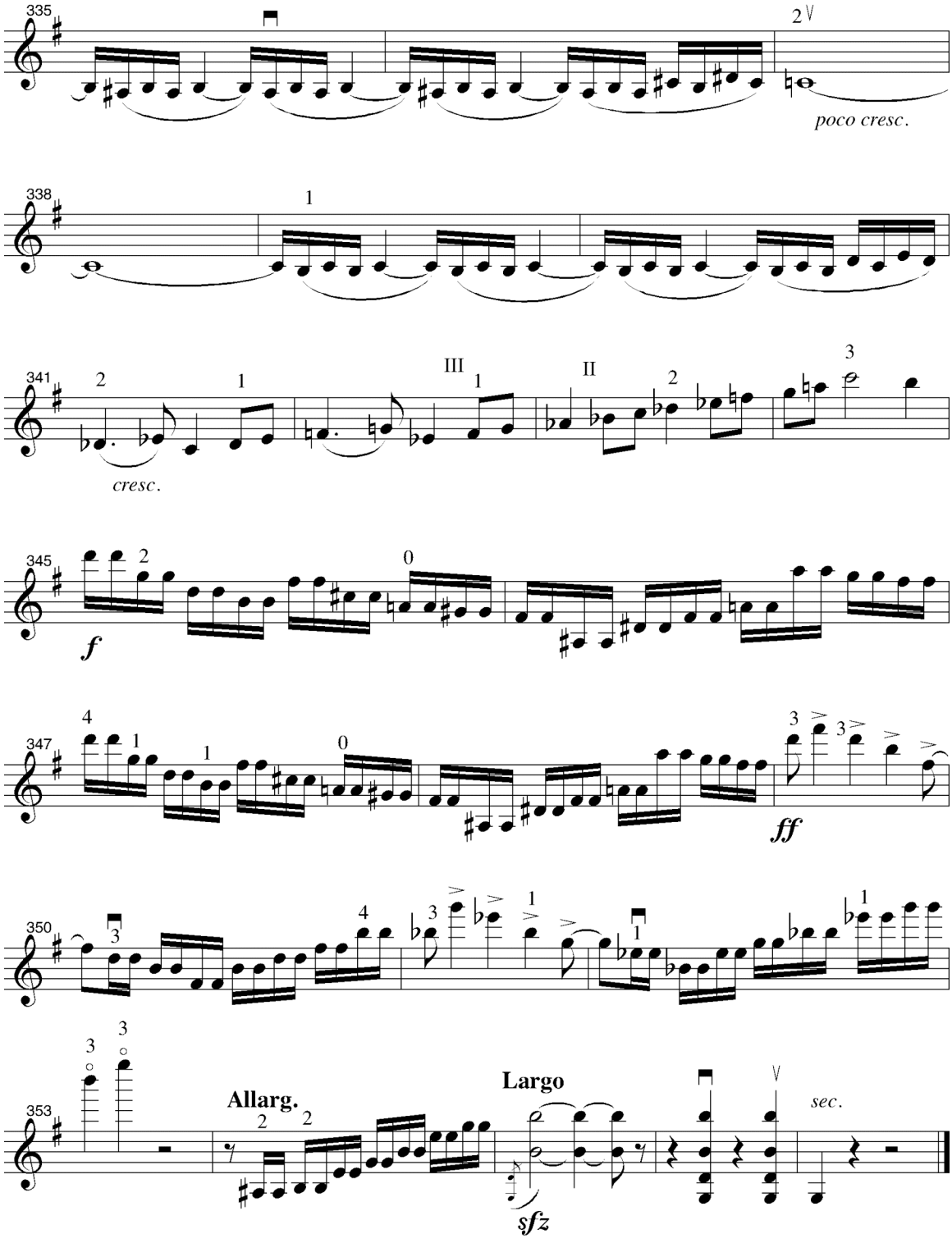

207
211
a Tempo
215
p
219
mf cresc.
sfz
223
sfz
sempre f
228
f
230


232
234
236
239
243
247
249
p sub.
cresc.
f
Poco allarg.


252
a Tempo
ff
256
260
sempre ff
264
268
p
275
p
281


285
cresc.
288
f
290
Rit.
dim.
293
Tempo
p
297
301
cresc.
305
cresc. molto


308
f con calore
312
316
320
Cédez
dim. poco a poco
p
324
328
Rit.
a Tempo
pp
332


335
poco cresc.
338
341
cresc.
345
f
347
ff
350
353
Allarg.
Largo
sfz
sec.

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APPENDIX A

EDITIONS

Vierne, Louis. *Sonata in g minor for Violin and Piano*. Boca Raton, FL: Masters Music Publications, 1991.

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APPENDIX B

DISCOGRAPHY

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Robert, Anne. *Sonata pour violin et piano, en sol mineur, Op. 23*. CBC Musica Viva 1110. Compact Disc.

APPENDIX C

A-R EDITIONS GUIDELINES FOR RECENT RESEARCHES PROPOSALS

Publications 8551 Research Way, Suite 180
Production Services Middleton, Wisconsin 53562
608 836-9000
Fax 608 831-8200

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1. A summary argument (abstract) for the importance of making the music available to the scholar and performer. This statement should explain the nature of the original research to be presented in the edition.

2. A draft or detailed outline of the introductory essay.

3. An identification of the principal source(s) for the music and explanation of how the principal source was chosen as well as how any concordant sources will be used in preparing the edition. List the proposed musical contents, describing the criteria of inclusion for any anthology or selection.

4. A substantial sample transcription of music. In addition to the transcription, please include:

    - a photocopy of the corresponding portion of the principal source;
    - a summary of the editorial policies;
    - the appropriate critical notes; and
    - a typed copy of any vocal text in a foreign language and an English translation.

5. If another edition has already been published, provide an argument as to why you view it as inadequate; include copies of pages demonstrating the problem(s) that will be solved by the publication of a new edition.

6. Copies of any letters of permission obtained from holding institutions.

7. A summary of how much material has already been prepared and an estimate of the amount of time needed to complete the work. Please include

8. an estimate of the total number of manuscript pages for both text and music in the edition.

9. A vita statement

All material submitted in support of a proposal becomes the property of A-R Editions. Please retain copies of all important documents. We suggest that you send your proposals either with delivery confirmation or by a service that offers package tracking to avoid misdirected packages.

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Please send the proposal materials to Paul L. Ranzini at the above address. Proposals are reviewed quarterly by the staff musicologists at A-R and are sent out for external review. We will inform you as quickly as possible of our decision.

Rev. Apr-05

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO THE BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE

838 West Bessemer Ave.
Greensboro, NC 27408
(336) 274-2230
April 19, 2005

Bibliotheque Nationale:

I am giving permission to allow Dr. Ted Walton to pick up the microfiche of the original manuscript of Louis Vierne's *Sonata in g minor for Violin and Piano*, Opus 23, composed in 1906 and first published by Durand in 1908. Gaylor Callahan at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro ((336) 334 – 5849) made the transaction through Travel X on February 5, 2005 at the price of 22.90 Euros, payment # 1052325. It would be acceptable to me if he obtained the microfiche but more preferable if a photocopy of the document could be made. If the latter is acceptable, I would like both the violin and piano parts.

Sincerely,

Daniel Skidmore

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE INCONSISTENCIES IN THE DURAND EDITION

The violin part of Durand's edition (and the subsequent reprint edition by Kalmus) of Louis Vierne's *Sonata in g minor for Violin and Piano* occasionally has inconsistencies in bowings on important motivic gestures. While it is by no means unacceptable to vary the articulations, the disparities that exist in the first published edition lessen the music's comprehensibility. This appendix presents two representative examples from the first movement. Example 1 presents incongruity over several statements; example 2 shows discrepancies within a single statement.

Example 1: notice measures 4, 126, and 259.

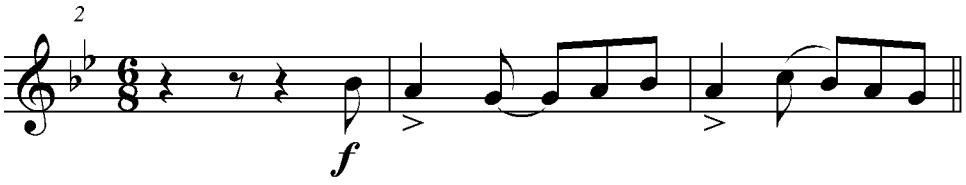


Figure 1

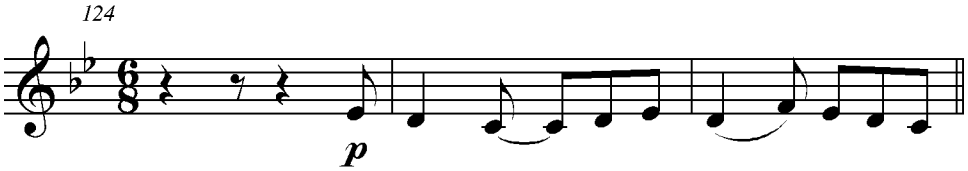


Figure 2

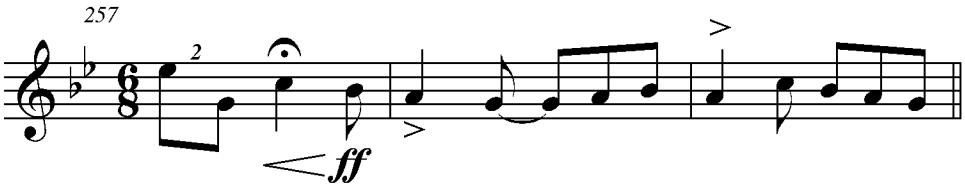
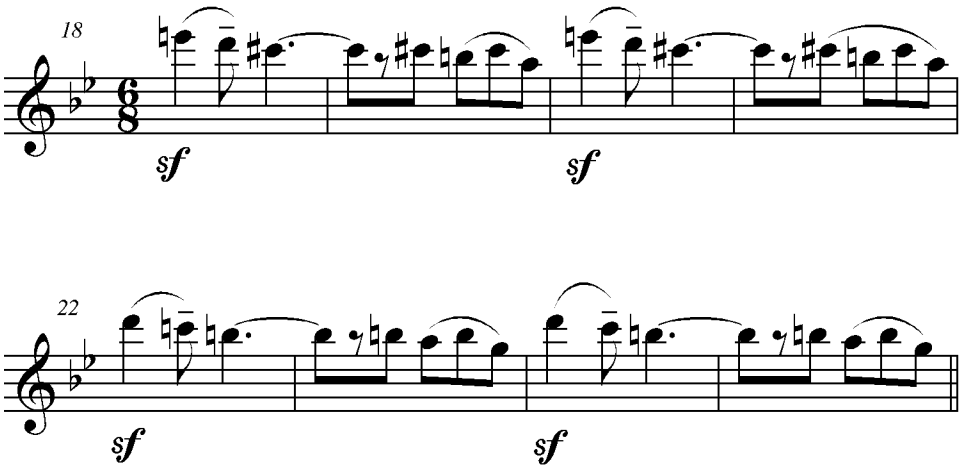


Figure 3

Example 2: Notice measure 21 as distinct from measures 19, 23, and 25.



VITA

Dan Skidmore is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in violin performance at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. He performs regularly as concertmaster of the Salisbury Symphony, assistant concertmaster of the Winston-Salem Symphony, and as a section violinist in the Greensboro Symphony, and he as appeared as a soloist with the North Carolina Symphony and the Salisbury Symphony. He teaches violin lessons at Catawba College and privately. In the summers he gives violin and chamber music instruction at the Eastern Music Festival and serves as a section violinist in the festival faculty orchestra. Mr. Skidmore also arranges music for string quartet, other chamber ensembles, and orchestra. Three of his arrangements are available through Alcove Publications in King, North Carolina.